PORTRAIT OF LADY MARY MONTAGU

IRIS BARRY

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Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, with a Negro page

From a portrait by Jonathan Richardson in the possession of the Earl of Harrington

PORTRAIT OF LADY MARY MONTAGU

By

IRIS BARRY

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To
F. G. Crookshank, N. D., F. R. C. P.

FOREWORD

THE past enthralls us because it is made up, not as the professors fancy of much that is buried, but of everything that lived. This story of a celebrated woman of the eighteenth century, presented in the form of a simple narrative, is in almost every detail based on fact, and more especially on Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's own letters and memoirs.

Several admirable biographies of this singular and altogether fascinating woman have been written, but like too many biographies they concern a corpse. She was very much alive. If any excuse were needed for telling again what almost every one loves to hear—the true story of a woman's life—this is my excuse, that I have tried to bring her back, not as a museum piece, but as a real person.

Though every page offers an opportunity for adding several foot-notes, of an explanatory or merely erudite nature, I decided altogether to omit these in sympathy for the reader, too often vexed and bewildered by little figures and long notes.

No one would have been less pleased, or more surprised than Lady Mary herself had she known that

posterity would remember her as the woman who introduced inoculation for smallpox into England. She never regarded that as a remarkable action; rather as a simple piece of common sense. Smallpox was terribly common and almost always fatal in her day, and any remedy was worth trying. The idea that she would be venerated for it would have made her smile wryly, though she would have appreciated the humor of her position in the halls of fame as the founder of a custom which, were it practised to-day, would be criminal.

She had nothing of the benefactor about her. She was a typical aristocratic Englishwoman of the eighteenth century, with all the unbounded energy, even eccentricity of her kind: self-confident, arrogant, and ambitious. Her desire was to make a mark in her world.

Living, she succeeded though not to her satisfaction. She was the most eminent woman of her times. Daughter of a duke, wife of an ambassador, mother-in-law of a prime minister, herself a celebrated poetess, wit and beauty, and cruelly lampooned by Pope, she achieved an immense reputation.

But dead, Lady Mary Montagu's celebrity was another matter. Extolled for her looks, her portraits by no means wholly satisfy posterity's changed ideals of loveliness. Famed for her wit, almost

nothing that she is recorded as having said rings out from the printed page with the attributed accents.

Was she scandalous? Pope and Horace Walpole, who both had reason to dislike her, said vile things about her which every one remembers and few quite believe. Her contemporary, Mrs. Lætitia Pilkington, who padded her *Memoirs* with every scrap of scandal she could scrape up in the metropolitan rubbish-tip, speaks of Mary with veneration and awe. What gossip there was to her disadvantage passed current, at any rate, only in her own fashionable circle.

The real woman is something of a mystery, and is to be found only in a phrase here and there that she wrote, or in the general effect that she made. Her letters show how shrewd she could be, how tender, how indiscreet, how philosophical. Her life showed her as a rebel, not constitutionally but by circumstance.

She called herself "one of the condemned." She planted herself, young, in woman's territory and found it barren, deserting it for the warlike world of the emotions and the intellect. She loved her father yet lived in protest against his domination. Her long courtship with Wortley Montagu was a paper war. Her son grew up a ne'er-do-well whom she detested and despised. He outlived her many

years in a world of intrigue, crime and adventure, played the bigamist with a dozen women, and died in the arms of Romney the painter while on a degrading errand.

When Mary retired at last to a foreign solitude after her private griefs and public disaster at Pope's hands, a most singular relationship with her daughter, Lady Bute, developed. Seeing her ascend the ladder of success, Mary found some happiness.

In actual fact, Lady Bute was a worthy nobody. The mother (though the daughter did not know it and burned her diaries and her manuscripts) was definitely a great woman. Not only did she impress her own age; she understood it. She was a rebel in an age of rebellious thought; and in her way she was aware of new ideas and impulses that led to the struggle with America, the French Revolution, to Mary Wolstencraft, Godwin and eventually Mrs. Pankhurst. She rebelled against the attitude of men to women; and seemed, to the earnest ladies of the close of the eighteenth century, a patron saint, a star in blue stockings. She was, without being an adventuress, the first of the New Women.

But to the reader of to-day she will seem, I hope, principally a real woman. It was two hundred years ago that she shopped in Bond Street and visited Venice, but her wishes, her feelings, even the trend

of her thoughts were essentially like ours and unlike those of women of her own and earlier times.

In order to save confusion, I have given Mary's father his title of Duke of Kingston right from the opening of the book, though when the story begins in 1707, Mary then being eighteen years old, he had not yet attained that rank. Lord Chesterfield appears as Philip Stanhope.

To Lord Harrowby for permission to use a reproduction of his romantic and beautiful portrait of Lady Mary which stands here as frontispiece, I beg to express my thanks. The plumbago drawing of Mary sweetly reclining, fan in hand, among trees, is taken from a photograph of the original, in the Print Room of the British Museum. It is very like the Richardson portrait, and undoubtedly a portrait of Mary, though who the artist was is uncertain. If it was Liotard, the Swiss artist, then he must have drawn it in Constantinople during her stay there, since he did not visit England until after she had left it. The fact that I have been unable to trace the present owner of the original will, I trust, exonerate me from blame for having failed to obtain permission to use it.

IRIS BARRY

Bloomsbury

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PORTRAIT OF LADY MARY MONTAGU

PORTRAIT *of* LADY MARY MONTAGU

CHAPTER I

THE PARENT

THE Duke of Kingston was angry. He stood in the window of his house in Arlington Street, glaring at nothing. The pleasant air of that fashionable new residential quarter puffed in on his cheeks, which were uncomfortably warm; the noisy cries of a decrepit man peddling one of the all-prevalent, ever-malicious broadsheets against the Whigs irritated his ear. A footman, already aware of his master's ill-humor, came cautiously in and announced that the coach would be ready in a few more minutes.

The Duke turned, shouted abusive language at the man and as the door closed, drew his handsome mouth into an ugly grimace and sat down to consider the objectionable letter which had caused his present, not uncommon mood.

His daughter Mary had written to him in a spirit which he considered indecent, though not one word

or one phrase in it could he lay hold of or declare she had written to vex him.

As his eyes followed again the lines of hardly mature writing his mind fussed indefinitely with the cause of his present passion. He seemed to recall that since his wife's death—here a pang of purely insincere and self-pitying sentiment obsessed him—he had always been too busy to attend overmuch to the education of his three daughters, and that, at the same time, he had always been plagued by their existence, and by that of his daughter Mary most of all. Pretty, pert little thing she had been as a child, though. When now and then he had driven down to her Wiltshire grandmother's to see her, when already eight years old she first came to London, when later at Thoresby he snatched a few weeks' repose from the ardors of politics and love, there she had been, more man than her brother, queening it outrageously, sober, too, with her head full of books and learning, and that sharp tongue of hers for which she had often been whipped, yet never wept.

What was a man of fashion to do with three awkward daughters, now? There wasn't a grown man of quality he knew he could bear anywhere near them, and not many of even the polished kind of woman. Marry they must: but not yet, not until he

thought fit. William, the boy, was a simple enough matter. The Duke of Kingston felt as Lord Chesterfield, later, did about boys. But Mary with her tongue, and Frances with her odd tantrums, and Evelyn with her stubbornness—they curtsied to him, they seemed to obey him, and yet he felt that under all that show of filial affection and obedience, there were other elements.

What was Lady Mary saying in these lines before his eyes? She was eighteen years old, was she? and though it was true his commands were that she should stay at Thoresby and not come to town until the spring, she placed before him certain gently but positively conveyed reasons why it would be to the advantage of all were she to come to town immediately. She wished that the wife of the steward might now relieve her of some of her graver cares in the household, as they were tedious and could well be performed by—he fancied she meant—a less exquisitely extraordinary person than his daughter Mary. Rat it, she knew how to phrase it, but that was the meaning. Did he not fancy, too, that she challenged him? She spoke at any rate of many matters arranged without his consent and obviously against wishes that he had not recognized until they were disobeyed.

There had been much visiting, Thoresby had en-

tertained guests. One would fancy her already the first matron in the land, or his mistress, by the commanding way she used her liberties. Personable young men had ridden over, had they? And Mary had gone off visiting in the Forest to that girl of Chiswell's too!

The master of the house pushed the offending letter into his pocket, roared aloud: footmen came hastily in and he as hastily flung past them and rushed down the staircase, with the frightened menservants after him, stepped into his handsome coach, roared again. Some one must run to Sir Isaac Newton's and warn him his Grace could not dine with him. One man turned away. Other of the footmen jumped up behind the carriage, footmen ran in front, the whip fell, hoofs rang, and the bright equipage bumped off along the miserably rough street. The Duke of Kingston had decided it was urgently necessary for him to repair at once to his great house, Thoresby in Nottinghamshire, and curb the spirits of his daughter Mary. Even a Whig lord may dislike signs of revolution.

Lady Mary Pierrepoint, at that same time, stood at the window of the little parlor at Thoresby, and contemplated nothing. The rain fell against the windows, lashed every blade of grass in the

Thoresby Hall, the Nottinghamshire seat of the Duke of Kingston

From Thorton's History of Nottinghamshire, photo by Donald Macbeth, London

park, peppered the surface of the wide artificial lake. The big clump of trees on the right rocked ill-humoredly in the wind, their dark leaves glistening. A group of deer, their flanks dark with moisture, huddled under the trees, and from their bodies steam rose and hung in the saturated air.

Mary was full of heaviness, and a kind of nostalgia for that country of happiness in which she so secretly and fixedly believed, but the passport to which she did not possess. Everything was so terribly familiar: Thoresby, and the park, the servants and their livery, the stillroom and banqueting-hall, the fussy voice of her old nurse, the conversation of her sisters. Only her father was unfamiliar. His figure had always seemed so bright to her, she had felt her heart thumping against her bodice whenever she saw him coming toward her. And he took so little notice of her.

There was a time, a strange and wonderful time in her childhood when he had shown he loved her. They had all come up from her Grandmother Pierrepoint's in Wiltshire, along the roads, bag and baggage to London. It was all very unfamiliar: the streets full of the strangest people, many of them not even speaking English; being carried in chairs; little voyages on the river to pay visits in Chelsea; and the dull, amiable Queen. Ladies in beautiful

dresses petted her, grown-up men in lovely clothes like her father's played with her. And one night her nurse came chattering and flustering in, woke her, lifted her from her bed, dressed her, bundled her into a coach, and carried her through the streets, the flaring torches of the menservants going before them. It was all very exquisite to remember, definite and yet intangible, like a happy dream.

Her father had come to meet her at the house where they stopped, and carried her, big girl of eight though she was, into a great room full of lighted candles and laughing men, and set her on his knee among them all. And the laughing men got up, and drank her health, and said pretty, praising things about her. The place where it happened was called the Kit-Cat Club, and she had been their toast, verses had been written in her honor, her name engraved on a drinking-glass. How dear her father had been, giving her a little squeeze now and then, and one of his rare kisses when old nurse came to carry her off again, back through the darkness to bed, until it all seemed like a thing that had never really happened, but was going to happen soon.

They had gone, she and Frances and Evelyn and little William, to Thoresby after that. They were always here now. Even if their father did send for them to London, or come to them, it was never the

same as it had been that one glorious time. There were always crowds of people about him, and he took little notice of her—far more of those women she knew were his mistresses and who carried themselves like queens though they were nothing but guests and she, her father's oldest daughter, was hostess and in a sense head of the house. No, all that happened was that she felt sulky, her arms ached from carving for them all, her head from the endless pother with servants and housekeeping. Her heart was dull and empty.

Mary felt that she hated her father, who used her only—as indeed she had noticed bitterly, fathers generally used their wives and daughters—with contempt and commands and distance, as necessary furniture.

Well, she had written to him, almost refusing to stay set in this dreary place. He should let her go to London, or she would—she didn't quite know what.

Her sister Frances sat in a great chair near the hearth at the far side of the little parlor, tears running down her face as she greedily devoured the pages of the romance which her sister had finished the day before. She gave a great sob. Mary turned round, teased her, came over and sat on the arm of the chair. For some reason that she did not quite understand herself, she too suddenly began to cry.

Half laughing, the two girls cried together. "For you see," said Frances, "nothing ever happens to us!"

Before they knew it, they were repining their sad lot openly. Only sometimes very late at night had they confessed their feelings like this. But the afternoon was so wet, and the air so heavy, and their sister Evelyn had been so ill-tempered and difficult; and worst of all . . . there was the letter sent impetuously by Mary to their father in London, which could not but have dire consequences. "And," said Frances, leaping a conversational gap that neither felt, "Mistress Terriss, and little Anne, and the red-headed Eustace girl are all of them married."

Mistress Arnett already a mother and loved by the Earl of Arundel and her husband dying abroad: Betty, their cousin, a maid of honor: every one, every one but the three forgotten Pierrepoint girls with the forgetful, cruel, distant, hard-hearted, loose-living father. This was what Frances spoke of. Mary said little: the Duchess of Marlborough she certainly mentioned, for Sarah Jennings the golden-haired was her especial idol, and had often been gracious to her on the rare occasions Mary had had a glimpse of London.

The girls' two heads were close together as they ran on, discussing wild projects, growing bold in

thought, desperate. They jumped guiltily when the sallow footman whom they disliked came in with the tea chest and the urn and the china. Mary felt for the bunch of keys hanging on a long chain from her waist to unlock the tea. Frances sprang up to order her hair. Their sister Evelyn, repenting of her sulks, came sweeping in and sat by them.

As the three of them sipped the scented yellow tea out of their little china bowls, the rebellious, sentimental conversation ran on. After all, they were three grown women; it was high time they were let out of prison, past time: so thought old Nurse Norton too, who came bustling in now to join her young ladies and stitch as she sat by the fire. She filled their ears with tales scandalous, romantic, frightening, but all bringing them back again to the same idea—husbands, marriage, life in the world of fashion, admirers, intrigues, punishments, love.

The minds of Evelyn, Frances and Mary ran riot, but Mary looked farthest of them all. For she had deep in her heart the conviction that she was born to rule, to triumph. And where and how should one rule and triumph if not through marriage, in the great world, in our own or a foreign court? That desire she had known since she was taken to her father at his club when she was eight years old; and her father should not suffocate her dream now.

Marriage, she thought, unlike her sisters (who, for all their declarations, she suspected of being ninnies), was only a means of freedom. She sighed. Thoughts of Anne, Countess of Winchilsea, yes, and of Aphra Behn, who had been a spy for King William and had lived to write exceedingly naughty but successful plays, tormented her. Well, she could work hard and await the contest with her father which she was maneuvering.

The girls looked up, stirred as their brother Will came clattering in, good-humored, bringing a whiff of outdoors and wind with him. The boy flung himself down at his sister Evelyn's feet, full of his success in the hunting field. He had ridden hard and long, and his cheek was scarred by a great red scratch from a thorn bush jumped most successfully. Then he grew sleepy and lolled against his sister, almost buried in the full folds of her skirt. The three girls sat silent. Outside the parlor window the rain fell steadily.

When Mary was asleep that night under the canopy of her bed, it seemed to her that she was being carried through London by two black pigmies; and they came to a great crowd and a bear-fight. As soon as the men saw her they called off the dogs; and one of them pushed his way up to her chair, and told her that she must fight the bear her-

self. She was very frightened, but she stepped down and went to the bear, and said she didn't wish to fight it, and if it would bow at the name of the Queen they would remain good friends. But the bear stretched out its claws at her and opened its mouth and growled. So she jumped over its head and it changed to a small girl, who ran away very quickly, hiding her face in her hands. And their neighbor, Mr. Edward Wortley Montagu, came and gave her a copy of Defoe's pamphlet on the Education of Women, saying, "This is one of the two greatest books in the world, but the other you must find for yourself."

CHAPTER II

THE INTERVIEW

Evelyn Pierrepoint, Duke of Kingston and Marquess of Dorchester, represented a long line of Pierrepoints who, since the Conquest, had always maintained considerable position and frequently contrived to cut a figure about the English Court. Whenever there had been fighting for the Crown they played their profitable part close to the King, or close to the man who, they had sense to see, would be King to-morrow. They were rich: not among the greatest families in the land perhaps, but a noble and powerful family for many centuries.

The accident that his two elder brothers died heirless raised Evelyn Pierrepoint from the position of youngest son of a younger son of this respectable house to the peerage. Not long before this unexpected good fortune, he had married Lady Mary Fielding, daughter of the Earl of Denbigh, a pleasant and amenable woman. She had already given him a daughter, and she added an heir and two other daughters within three years. Hitherto

confined to the pleasures of the town on a moderate income, with visits to his widowed mother in Wiltshire for variety, Evelyn Pierrepoint suddenly found himself rich both in lands and in money, and master of the great house at Thoresby in Sherwood Forest, and Holm Perpont, the lesser, older house near by.

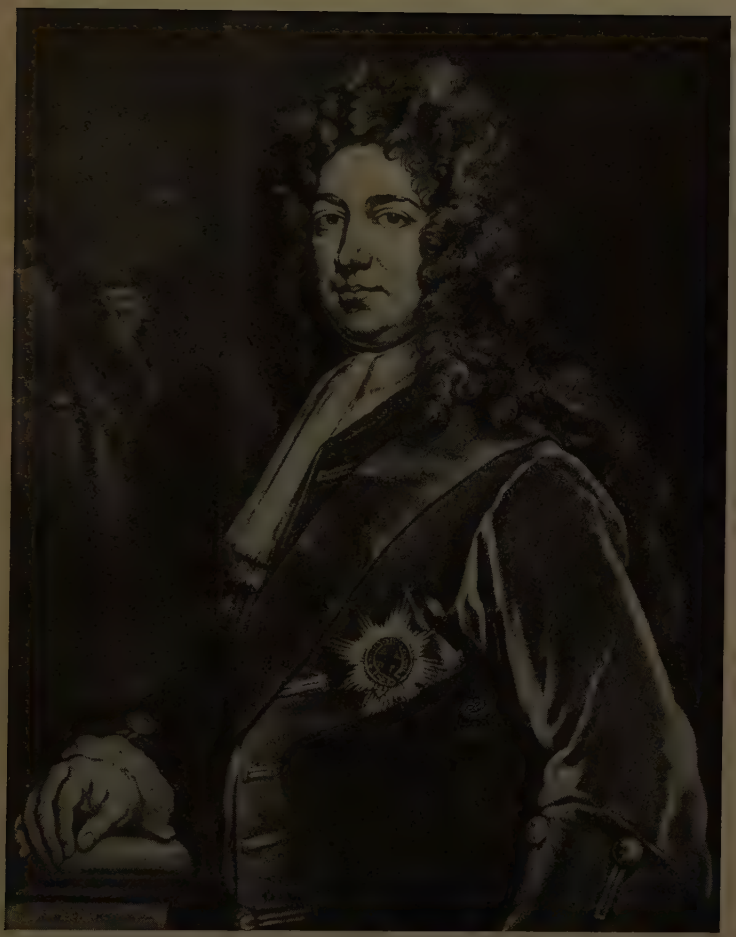
The first of the house which he now headed had been Robert de Perpoint, one of the greedy Normans who flocked over in the train of William the Conqueror and possessed themselves of the fat lands of South England. Robert did well by himself: he sat down in Sussex on some of the best land of all. Four centuries later a descendant, Henry Perpoint, won distinction under Edward IV for his services against the Lancastrians. This Yorkist Perpoint's son, George, acquired several large estates and manors under Henry VIII after the dissolution of the monasteries, became staunchly loyal to the Protestant succession, was knighted under Edward VI and died, after building Holm Perpont, well in Queen Elizabeth's reign.

His grandson Robert, a wealthy and cultivated man, who married Frances, daughter of Sir William Cavendish, was one of the most ardent Cavalier officers. In the service of his royal master he acquitted himself boldly and well, and Charles I

created him, first, Baron Pierrepoint of Holm Perpoint, and then Earl of Kingston. Lieutenant-General of the Royalist forces, he was taken prisoner by the Roundheads at Gainsborough and sent under escort by boat to Hull. A party of Royalists under Sir Charles Cavendish, his connection, came to the rescue, and in the fight that followed the "good Earl of Kingston" was killed.

The stormy years that followed saw his sons ranged on opposing sides. Henry, the second Earl, remained loyal to the Stuarts; but the younger, William, who was known as "Wise William," joined the Parliamentary party and became an intimate and highly respected adviser to Cromwell. At the restoration he retired from public life, and lived unmolested in his great house at Thoresby, where he died in 1678 before his Jacobite brother. Evelyn Pierrepoint, the fifth Earl, afterward Duke of Kingston, and his two older brothers, the third and fourth Earls, were William's grandchildren.

Like so many of the rich landowners and nobles, and in the tradition of his grandfather, Evelyn Pierrepoint was a staunch Whig. He had been well trained by listening to the conversation of his seniors, in the theories of constitutional law that the party held. William III represented to him not so much the King of England, as the head of the Prot-



Evelyn Pierrepoint, Duke of Kingston

After a portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller, photo by Donald Macbeth, London

estant forces of Europe. James II was well dead, and the Duke of Marlborough as nearly a Whig by circumstance as one could desire. The Duke of Kingston was also pleased with the rôle he had played, this very year of 1707, as a Commissioner for the Union of Scotland, which his friends and leaders, Lords Somers and Halifax (the latter a distant connection of his by marriage), had so ably brought about.

The year before had seen Lord Halifax elected President of the new Royal Society, where modern science in all her splendor entranced the large proportion of men of power and fashion. Lord Sunderland, son-in-law to the conquering Marlborough, honest Tom Wharton, and Sir Isaac Newton were among his most intimate and affectionate friends; and what with the influence of Sarah Marlborough about the Queen, and the success of Halifax with the country's finances, Evelyn Pierrepoint felt that he, as a member of the best and wisest party that had ever guided the bright island of England, Wales and Scotland united, held a position peculiarly suited to his personality and attainments, and pleasing, surely, to Providence.

He saw that it had been no more than he deserved when he married the Earl of Denbigh's daughter. It was ungrateful of her to die so early in their

wedded life, but at least she waited till she had left him an heir as well as those three daughters. She had been a pleasant, quiet woman; hardly ever failed to understand his wishes or to efface herself if his mood demanded her absence. He forgot that her very quietness had provoked him, sometimes, beyond bearing. "Can't you speak your mind, woman?" he used to demand, "or have you no mind to speak?" But these irritations passed from memory when she died. She was a good soul, and he regretted her in comfort.

There had been many other women, too, in his life; not particularly brilliant ladies, perhaps; not those supreme divinities who bring a man into mischief, demanding their own terms, always out of hand, and trying to rule instead of being content to charm. But they had loved him: and here and there little boys and girls with no right to the name of Pierrepoint were growing up to call him father.

But in all his pleasuring he had never forgotten what a man of position owes to his country. There were no better kept lands than his: few had supported the constitution more loyally, and few accepted less bribes and made less profit out of politics than he. It was worth while. He had avoided all the troubles that clustered thick round men like Harley, Marlborough, Bolingbroke, while deriving

a certain kind of enjoyment from the pretty movement of politics, the coming and going of kings, of freedoms, of law-makers.

He had taken nothing that was not his; and authority smiled on him. The Queen was quite fond of him, silly creature; he stood well with every one, and people considered him honest who was only lazy. Being lazy-honest had given him plenty of time to amuse himself, and not only with light pleasures. No man kept a better list of witty friends than he, and he had even heard it said that he had as much wit as Steele and more than Addison, those young professionals of wit, if only he liked to use it. His tongue especially was good: he knew how not to hurt and yet to make his meaning known deep.

* * * * * * * *

When the Duke of Kingston at last reached Thoresby he was more bitterly furious than ever. The journey had been wretched. The roads were unspeakable; he had been jolted beyond all bearing, overturned twice, and cruelly bitten by bugs at the Warwickshire inn where he lay. All these annoyances he attributed to his daughter. It was her unfeeling conduct that had brought him to Thoresby, and if he had not considered that he must deal with it immediately, he would have been spending his time pleasurably in London. He flung himself

through the portico, stamped and swore in the front hall as first one and then half a dozen surprised servants came running to him, and going straight to the library, ordered a woman to inform Lady Mary that he desired her attendance. Meanwhile he straightened his clothes, told his valet to shake out his wig, and composed his features; for even in anger there should be decorum, unless one is speaking to the lower orders.

Mary came into the long dark room with a mild and happy look upon her face. It was a look she had practised over and over again. It seemed to her to express so much of duty and so much of joy in her father's presence that he could not fail to be pleased with her. She desperately wished that, now she was a grown woman, they could talk understandingly together, with frankness and good humor and wit. She desperately wished that the tension and timidity she felt before him could be vanquished, that he should perceive suddenly, by her winning air, that she was a living creature, and an intelligent and individual woman; no longer a mere daughter. Her smile was to help to establish a bright intuitive sympathy between them. It was an appeal for tenderness and a promise of love.

"Come here, girl!" said her handsome father.

Mary's heart slipped. She felt faint and sick. It

was so stupid. She had been walking over to his chair already. There could be no purpose in words like that and a tone like that except to make her feel small and childish. But she came closer to him, and stooped gracefully to the floor, her skirts billowing round her, to kiss his long languid hand peremptorily extended to her.

"I received a letter in London," he continued, "which I did not understand; or rather which I hope I did not understand. Is it possible you are ill satisfied with the care I take of you? Have you been considering, with more wisdom and experience than I possess, the proper mode of education for young ladies, the best time for them to come into the world of fashion, the most fitting acquaintance for them to hold, the most suitable residence, the most instructive diversions?

"And may I at last know whether it is from my heartlessness or my ignorance that you judge me incapable of superintending these affairs on your behalf?"

"Indeed, father," replied Mary, "I had no wish to oppose you. I thought it would be as much to your pleasure as to my advantage if I were to leave this rusticity and learn to comport myself in a more civilized and court-like way. I am sure you would wish your daughter to be known for a woman of

taste and intelligence. But what exercise can I obtain in manners, or what cultivation for the mind, here where there are few but country squires and bucolic heroes around us? I fear for myself, sir, lest I should sink through this retirement to be nothing more than a weariness of the spirit to my acquaintances. And I fear for you, lest you should have a daughter who disgraces you. And truly"—here Mary began to speak with more spirit and confidence—"truly, sir, I think that you can not but forget the tedium of the country when you are so much in the town. For the country is an occasional refreshment to you, where to me it is only a round of trivial duties and dull leisure. Indeed, sir, I think I know most how this life affects me and how ill it equips me to play the part of my rank."

"A pox you do, my dear!" said her father, in the politest and gentlest of voices. The words stopped in Mary's mouth. For a time she could think of nothing to say, and tears came into her eyes. Her father pretended to be waiting for her to continue with the gravest attention. And she was standing still, with a terrible impulse to stamp her feet and scream, and an equally terrible impulse to fling herself on her father's breast and kiss him and tell him that it was her dearest ambition to do as he wished. But nothing would break down his foreignness and

distance and impassivity. It seemed to her a deadlock that lasted for ages. And then her words came with a rush, far more childish than she wished, but not to be held in or refashioned.

"Truly it is tedious, father," she said. "You can not believe how much. I look out of the window and see nothing but miles of dirt. Nothing new ever happens. I see no new faces. All the gossip I hear is deadly dull—calves and chickens and the farm-boy who broke a leg. It is so wearisome. Sometimes I feel I could choke with *ennui,* and I have headaches, too. There are a mort of books I read, but I ask myself why I read them, and what use I can put them to. And I can't think what service it is all doing me. It would be different if I could talk to others about them; but there are only my brother and my sisters, and we know each other too well.

"And it is so dismal to think that perhaps it will never be anything different. I long to meet wits and courtiers, and I know I could make a good appearance among them if I had the chance. But to be penned down here! And there are girls of my own age already married, and it looks as though being married was the happiest of all freedoms. But who is to marry me? The men whom I see——"

"So!" said his Grace the Duke, with a burst of

fury, "when I imagine you are living quietly and dutifully here, your head runs on marriage and men and wantonness! Whatever my daughters may be, I *will* not have them wantons. You'll think of men when I think of men for you. You shall hear me in this and obey me; or, before God, I shall pen you up and bar you in, and confine, and correct, and punish you for the vagabond hussy you give every promise of being. You shall never leave your room, and never see any face but your own. I doubt I have been too indulgent a parent. Now listen! Understand that I am older and better acquainted with the world than you are. I do what I think best for you, and I refuse to have my plans impertinently criticized. If you come to London, it shall be at my suggestion. Do you think yourself better able to choose a husband than I? What knowledge of men have you, save what you have read from a hundred tilly-fally romances? Let us have no such nonsense and no such letters again."

Mary was hopeless and crushed. Her barriers seemed more and more impenetrable; there was no way out to life. And, in a way, she admired her father more than ever. "Father," she cried, "I did not mean to offend you; and I know, I know I should trust you and obey you." She wept, and she thought, "What a brute he is to me!"

"Come, chuck, nó more tears!" said he. "Believe me, my designs are only for your happiness. You may go now."

Down the great room she went, not walking gracefully now, but hurrying, the tears streaming down her flushed face. The pictures on the walls seemed to eye her malignantly, pieces of furniture got in her way, and as she flew through the door she fancied she heard her father laughing. She flung up the stairs, down the gloomy corridor, and crashed into her room.

Lady Frances was struggling into a fine saffron-colored dress with a couple of young maids lacing her up and smoothing her down and putting pins in the wrong places. She at least was not going to face her father in a linen gown and plain tucker like a country wench, as Mary had.

"Lord, sister, what did he say?" she asked, twisting out of the clutches of her women.

Mary was red in the face, stamped her foot; her eyes blazed; tears were on her cheeks.

"The villainous man, the villainous, heartless man," was all she could say, and flung herself on the bed in screaming hysterics.

Nurse Norton came waddling in, one of the little maids ran for spirits of hartshorn. They tried to soothe her, Frances exhorting her to be calm.

Footsteps echoed all over the house, doors opened and shut. "The bedpan for his Grace's chamber," some one called urgently, and cursed under his breath. Outside dogs barked.

Mary threw off her comforters and rushed to the window. Far below she saw her elegant father, one arm round William's shoulder, a sprig of some herb between his lips, on his way to the kennels, and laughing, the claret of his coat a big bright blot in the autumn afternoon's prospect.

She turned pale now and stood still a moment, her hand at her throat to quiet the involuntary sobs which still shook her.

"My brocade dress!" she called sharply to the bigger of the two maids. Frances waited while she made herself fine, bathed her face and applied cosmetics. Her keen pretty face and her great eyes, made brighter because of the tears, appeared to particular advantage now; her brocade dress—a faint blue-colored ground with silver and rose flowers woven in it, set her off splendidly, especially after her sister had adjusted it; for Mary was a little untidy.

The two sisters went down together apprehensively. It was just on four and the steward announced dinner to her father and brother, standing by the hall's great hearth fire, as the girls came

toward them. The meal was excellent. Mary had been taking carving lessons and acquitted herself with the solider dishes. Her father was studiously gracious and helped himself and the rather puzzled William liberally to wine. When Mary, who had contrived to look perfectly serene and converse intelligently, rose from table, and Frances with her, their father rose too, a little unsteadily, and put out his hand to Mary, drawing her closer as she was going to curtsy herself out of the room. He drew a ring from his little finger, a ring of three considerable diamonds, and gave it to her with a charming though slightly sardonic smile.

The girls departed, the Duke of Kingston and his heir drank on till a great deal later, when the servants carried them both carefully up-stairs to bed, and undressed them with practised hands.

Mary, who had been playing and singing gaily at the harpsichord all evening, went to bed late and lay awake a long time, turning the ring round and round on her finger and wishing violently that she were a man.

As it was, she realized her father would almost certainly always get the better of her. The thought made her very angry indeed, and violently rebellious plans which she knew she would never put into execution coursed through her mind.

The next day her father went away again, and took William with him, swearing it was time he went to the university, and left a pack of teasing girls. And Evelyn the youngest sister was to be fetched that day fortnight by his sister, whom they all called Aunt Cheyne. Mary returned to her books, Frances to stitching and yawning the days away.

CHAPTER III

MISS WORTLEY'S BROTHER

After her tussle with her father Mary grew quieter. It seemed obvious to her now that she would never have her own way unless she learned considerably more *finesse*. Explosions and appeals had always proved useless. She felt how childish it was to rely on the good nature of other people. Allow them too near a glimpse into one's heart and they immediately took advantage of that innocent exposure.

In the two years that followed she had undertaken a correspondence with Mistress Anne Wortley and by 1709 the interchange of letters occupied many of her leisure hours. She did not at first understand why she took so private a delight in those letters. She wished immensely to stand well in Mistress Anne's eyes, and Mistress Anne was as anxious to please her. They confessed their own deficiencies and their utter unworthiness of each other's love. In the same breath they scolded each other for neglect, and themselves for exactingness,

and swore everlasting attachment, and looked gloomily forward to the inevitable breakdown of their friendship. Mary felt a terrible and uneasy pleasure, as though somehow she was engaged in a daring and dangerous rebellion against her father. And this was absurd, she thought; for there was no reason at all why she should not write to Mistress Anne as often and as intimately as she chose.

She had known the Wortleys for years; their father's house at Wharncliffe was only about thirty miles away from Thoresby. Her father was on excellent terms with his distant kinsman, Lord Halifax, and Lord Halifax was a kinsman of the Wortleys, too. His grandfather had been friendly with their grandfather, Samuel Pepys' friend, the Earl of Sandwich. There was nothing to distinguish the Wortleys at all sharply from the other suitably well-bred families that Mary knew; but somehow she felt that they were all, in a quite unintelligible way, very alien and dark and exciting.

There was the Honorable Sidney Montagu, their father. He seemed to belong to an older, more active, less thoughtful race of beings; a disreputable, rakish old fellow, who treated every one with the same good-humored persiflage, and for all the sniffs and frowns of the family had long maintained a mistress in considerable state in a grand

house near by where he could visit her. He enjoyed having his brother, the Dean of Durham, to stay with him. He would listen to his exhortations to piety with a seeming deference and draw him out to speak of Revelation and the Principles of Natural Religion. Suddenly he would throw his head back, slap his thighs and burst into coughs and gulps and roars of laughter.

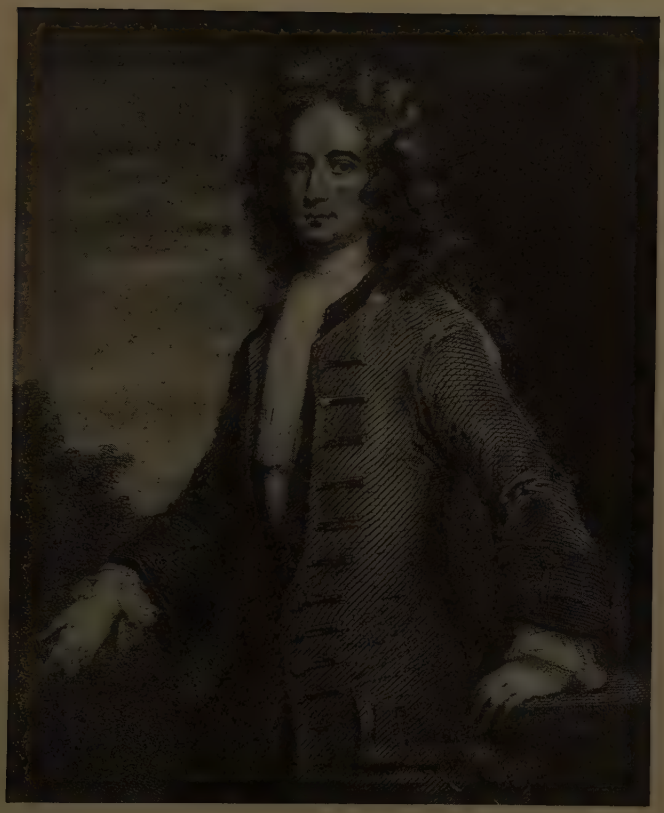
"Why, brother, you've hit the white!" he would cry. "My religion to a hair! I follow the laws of Nature. But what a sly devil you are. Encouraging us sinners in the ways of the flesh."

And the gentle Dean would look mightily offended and turn on him a glance of mild benevolence and shake his head at the chaplain by his side, so that his long white hair wagged and trembled under his black velvet skull-cap.

Sidney Montagu had married a young lady called Anne Newcomen, the passionately loved and illegitimate daughter of Sir Francis Wortley, whose name he adopted when he inherited his rich estates. His children, Anne, Katherine and Edward, were known indifferently as Wortley or Montagu; precise people called them Wortley Montagu. Like Mary's mother, Anne Newcomen had been dead many years. In the early eighteenth century a number of wives failed to survive the first ten years of matrimony.

And Mary had always taken an interest in Anne and Katherine, and some notice of the much older Edward. Their circumstances gave her a curious sense of parallel—a rakish and widowed father, a country estate, an admiration for bookishness and wit. Even before she was very intimate with them, she had a silly feeling that she knew them from some past, transfigured time. And as she knew them better, she could hardly get out of her head the dream that she was a changeling; that instead of her own two sisters and brother she was really of one blood with Anne and Katherine—and that strange, self-contained, serious, powerful and exasperating gentleman, Mr. Edward Wortley Montagu.

Mary was quite at a loss to know what she really thought of Mr. Wortley Montagu. He carried himself with an air of great self-importance; and such a characteristic in any one else would have moved her to ridicule. But she found it impossible not to be impressed by his gravity and his spontaneous demand that he should be treated with the most careful consideration; almost with awe and submission. His two sisters were his slaves. It never occurred to them to doubt that he was the center of the universe. They fell in with his moods; they listened to his opinions as though he were the one fountain of truth. His enemies were their enemies.



Edward Wortley Montagu

After a portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller, photo by Donald Macbeth, London

Anne was especially adoring. She brought all her problems and affairs to him for his advice—all of them that she did not think too trivial for his attention. Mary knew that even her own letters were handed over to Edward for his perusal before Anne allowed herself to reply. And this, perhaps, was one reason why Mary's heart fluttered when she sat down to write. She wrote with half an eye on her correspondent's brother: it was for him that she wrote her wittiest, vividest and most artfully natural phrases.

She was not quite sure that she liked him. She admired him. He seemed the most extraordinary and most unconquerably self-willed of all the young men she knew. There was only one talent he lacked, the gift of grace and gaiety. In his presence she was always conscious of a peculiar constriction of her feelings, a haunting air of gloom and tension. She was tempted to become more and more high-spirited and extravagant in the hope that his long, handsome and rather sulky face would relax into a smile. She wished violently to be prized by him; and even more to be trusted by him; to be let into his intimacy. She was afraid, too: afraid that she was being quite even-mindedly and inhumanly weighed and judged, as though by a deity whom no cajolery could soften.

Sometimes she said to herself that he was morose from an unappeasable vanity; but afterward she recognized it as absurd to accuse him of vanity. He respected himself, certainly; but he had every reason to think highly of his accomplishments and to plot ambitiously for his future.

Edward Wortley Montagu had done brilliantly at Cambridge. He was as much talked about as any of the younger members of Parliament, especially since he had introduced a bill into the House for the encouragement of learning and the securing the property in books to the rightful owners thereof. People had laughed at the idea of "copyright," but it had occasioned a great deal of serious discussion. It was still very fashionable to think well and deal generously by men of letters: even men of fashion were accomplished phrase-makers and poets. Young Wortley Montagu was an intimate friend of the sensitive Addison, had traveled with him abroad, and gloried, too, in the friendship of Steele.

It was said in Nottinghamshire that young Wortley was looking for a bride. Indeed it was to be expected, for he had a fair inheritance, was past thirty, and could expect a well-dowered marriage partner. No one, however, could guess whom he would choose. Notoriously, he did not love women, shunned the society of all but his sisters, sneered

openly at the gallants and time-wasters who trotted in fine array from one formal assembly to another to dance attendance on the reigning beauties and their satellites. Then a definite rumor had reached the ears of Mary that Mr. Wortley loved a certain maiden called Corinna. Fashion demanded that he be considered in love with her. The fact was that he had made inquiry, as custom allowed, of the figure that a husband might expect to get with her and apparently had found it interesting. At least Corinna boasted of her conquest.

There was still a good deal of the conscious idealist in Mary. She felt indignant that a prattling, foolish girl like Corinna should boast of the admiration of Wortley who loved only learning.

One afternoon, riding over from Thoresby to visit her friend Mrs. Hewet, whose husband was Surveyor of Woods and Forests, Mary had found herself at a card-table with Corinna, and Edward Wortley Montagu was keeping the bank for them. He made a polite remark about the new play of his friend Mr. Congreve. He mentioned that when he was last in town he had seen her sister Evelyn watching it from one of the stage boxes. She replied with a simple, few-worded opinion of the play, which she had read. She summed it up so truly, she expressed herself so modestly that her phrases gave

almost as much pleasure to the audience as to the phrase-maker. Mr. Montagu was enchanted, and even more so to find she admired Mr. Congreve's one novel. Lady Mary's heart fluttered with satisfaction. She replied to Mr. Montagu again calmly, thoughtfully, only her shining eyes betrayed her mood. And as she spoke Corinna let her fan fall. Mary checked herself, smiled with courteous sympathy, paused while Mr. Montagu bent to recover the lost toy. Corinna's rich dress rustled, Mr. Montagu bowed, Mary looked politely on till Mr. Montagu turned to her again. Corinna in the end was forced to remind him quite sharply that they were waiting for him to tally.

Mary had met the grave shrewd Mr. Montagu again on other visits at neighboring houses, had bowed to him prettily, half gravely, and then fallen to talking. Once or twice she had thought of him, when she heard her father had seen Mr. Addison, Mr. Steele or Doctor Garth—all his own friends too. This was the world she sighed to share in, the one her father forbade.

Later when visiting Mistress Anne Wortley at Wharncliffe the grave gentleman came in, lingered, drank some tea. How glad she was, now, she had taught herself a little Latin, teased William to teach her more, had read here and there classical writers

of whom she could speak. Had she read Quintus Curtius? Alas, no. Mr. Montagu regretted it. After a little pause, during which she knew he was quizzing her, he walked out of the parlor again, though at her departure he came to mount her and her sister Frances on their ponies

It must have been quite a month or more later that a messenger arrived with a wonderfully bound copy of the *Historiæ Alexandri Magni* for Lady Mary. Her father, fortunately, knew nothing of it. Mrs. Norton secretly liked her young ladies to receive gifts, though she scolded. Frances and Mary ran away to a window-seat to look at the handsome volume. Inside the cover Mr. Montagu had written:

"Beauty like this had vanquished Persia shown,
The Macedon had laid his empire down,
And polished Greece obeyed a barbarous throne.
Had wit so bright adorned a Grecian dame,
The am'rous youth had lost his thirst of fame,
Nor distant Indus sought through Syria's plain;
But to the Muses' stream with her had run,
And thought her lover more than Ammon's son."

Naturally, for long afterward, Frances, to vex her, always spoke of Mr. Montagu as "the Macedon." But all the same, in spite of being a little confused about getting the book, and Frances' knowing of it and the laughter, Mary felt a great

satisfaction. She had been right after all. She knew that she had parts, she had cultivated them to the best of her power, and almost the first time she had the occasion to try her power on a man of real wit, she had made a conquest. For that was what it undoubtedly was. Mr. Montagu recognized that she was a woman of wit.

It was after that the correspondence with Mistress Anne Wortley began. The time was coming when all the girls of their age were hoping soon to be allowed to consider themselves as women, to go to visit in state, to be seen a great deal in London, to have suitors treating for them in wedlock—in fact, to enter heaven. Nothing could have been more suitable than that Mary and Anne should be friends, confidantes. So they corresponded. There were times when the correspondence flagged. Edward was not always at his sister's side, and a little of the color went out of Mary's letters when there was no chance of their being overseen.

Things hung fire a little, too, when the Pierrepoints were in London in the spring. Frances and Mary had made the tedious but gladly borne journey up to Arlington Street soon after Twelfth-night, had been to the Opera, heard Nicolini, the new contralto, and had seen him perform his famous but rather *opéra-bouffe* business of strangling a lion.

Though the lion was a sadly un-leonine man in a skin, the sharp-eyed Mary was amused to see that Nicolini's paucity of attire gave no offense to, but rather interested, ladies who to her knowledge were prudish to a degree and cried out at the things the play-writers put in the mouths of the players. But Mary herself had as much gusto as she had honesty.

She had visited with Mrs. Selwyn, mother of Marlborough's aide-de-camp Sir John, and sister of the Nottinghamshire Mrs. Hewet to whom many of Mary's chattiest letters were written while she was in town. She was learning Italian—a concession wrung from her unwilling father—she was reading all the later books, including Mrs. Manley's *New Atlantis,* which shot more than a few bolts at celebrated men and women, or more specifically, lovers, of the day.

Books by women always intrigued Mary particularly. She devoured Aphra Behn, and thrilled at the stories about that singular lady's life—as a spy, as a courtezan, as a successful writer, as a famous dramatist. Years ago she had pored over Mrs. Astell's *Serious Proposal to the Ladies,* and often dreamed of a secluded university for women where she, Mary, would certainly dazzle all her beautiful and noble fellow students by her brilliance and learning and assiduity.

The desire to win her father's admiration—as, clearly, learning did—had played a great part in making her take to study and neglect her needle and her guitar. She was glad now: for every one played the guitar, since it had been discovered that it was the Queen's favorite instrument and that her Majesty was a divine performer on that musical machine. She had been to see a play by Susan Centlivre, who was the royal chef's wife. She had annoyed her father by looking boldly out of windows whenever she fancied Addison might be calling on him; she had driven in the Ring in Hyde Park. Old gentlemen had whispered indecorous compliments which she knew were insincere into her ear. Young gentlemen had darted far more flattering glances and far more touchingly said nothing.

She wore rich dresses, rode in a fine coach or a finer chair, gay with the liveries of her father's servants about her. Her Uncle Fielding had given her a cluster of brilliants that had been her Grandmother Fielding's as a girl. This was all excellent.

But it was not of these things that she wrote to Anne Wortley Montagu. To Mrs. Hewet she wrote gossip of scandalous marriages and of ladies at Bath who pawned diamonds to buy graceful young men snuff-boxes, since "wars make men so violent scarce, that these good ladies take up with the

shadows of them." But to the sweet-natured, beautiful Anne with her simple affectionate ways and her Junoesque figure, Mary wrote quite differently. And Anne, who—when she really wrote her own letters to Mary—was as giddy as you please and full of naughty little tales about Lord Herbert, a lady and a love-token, became a far more restrained and self-conscious young lady when her brother was behind her.

Soon Edward began to take the business seriously in hand. Since Mary suspected—was bound to suspect, had even been encouraged to suspect—that he was not wholly unconcerned in what his sister wrote, it was plain to him that he could not afford to let Anne rattle on in her careless, affectionate, scrambling way. It would be very galling if Mary attributed the wrong passages to him, and thought him interested in fopperies and girlish confidences. There was only one course to take, he thought. He could never quite feel entirely safe unless he wrote the whole Wortley side of the correspondence himself.

It was a new shock to Mary to receive a letter from her "dear, dear friend" so vastly unlike their ordinary habit of correspondence, so bolstered and strutted and stiffened in expression, so grave and formal. Anne had been sufficiently complimentary

before; but she had never been so much on her dignity. Mary read it as though there were a thousand nuances concealed in every word.

"17*th July* 1709.

"If transcribing were allowable you should have many Letters, for even the *Tatler* is better than anything I can do, but when I read yourn I am wild. But then compare your inimitable manner in everything with others. I may have hoped that that vast difference may justly make you value only the sincerity and love, without considering the style, sense, etc. Then I can be even with the author of the *Pleasure of the Imagination*. Now I have raised that thought will conclude you in a labyrinth of bliss. Nothing can raise me, and I might as well endeavor to sing with the best, when mightily pleased with the song, as hope to come to any perfection in a thing so much superior to my genius. I have run into a way that you might fancy like flattery, but assure yourself that I know you to be too nice a judge to endeavour to please you that way, if my pen, or any other, could do it. Be so good as to let me hear from you, and excuse me when I only tell you that I love you dearly, and am faithfully yours,

"A. Wortley."

Anne Wortley Montagu

After a portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller, in Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Her Times, by George Paston, G. P. Putnam and Son, London

She had no doubt of the author of the letter. She saw it as a first definite exploration, a trying of the ground, and she sent back a careful note which was as ingeniously tentative and non-committal as Edward's. When replying she confessed to a difficulty in writing to one whom she esteemed so greatly and whose friendship was so necessary to her happiness. And Anne was encouraged—or Edward in Anne's handwriting, rather—to speak with bolder innuendos. Her next letter ran:

"I am now in the room with an humble servant of yours [this was of course Edward], who is arguing so hotly about marriage that I cannot go on with my letter. I would be very glad to bring you into the argument, being sure you would soon convince us in what disturbs so many. Everybody seeks happiness; but though everybody has a different taste, yet all pursue money, which makes people choose great wigs. Because their neighbour sweats in it they dare not be easy out of the fashion. But you have dared to have wit joined to beauty, a thing so much out of fashion that we fly after you with as much interestedness as you often see the birds do when one superior comes near them."

Here indeed was something to disturb the mind

of Lady Mary Pierrepoint, this letter gave a pretty broad hint that there was at least in the thoughts of Edward a connection of ideas between marriage in the abstract and the varied charms of the recipient of the missive.

She was quite certain, and had written in her private diary, that she herself "never thought of marriage but as a bond that was to subject her to a master, and she dreaded an engagement of that sort. The little plan she formed to herself was retirement and study." At the same time, she was extremely satisfied in having earned at least more than the slight regard of the pensive Mr. Montagu; she ran no risk of lessening it, and replied:

"My study at present is nothing but dictionaries and grammars. . . . I forget there is such a place as London, and wish for no company but yours!"

She even went so far, in speaking against those who blindly follow the fashion, as to regret that she herself was weak enough to do so at least with regard to dress. What woman could say more in an endeavor to please a studious admirer? But he was not so very pleased, after all, since when his sister writes again it is to let Lady Mary know that the news has traveled of her being at Nottingham races,

at having seen Nicolini there, but—more significant—some other unnamed but obviously male person as well, and of having been well diverted in his company.

Before the same month of August was out, nevertheless, the studious young lady had convinced her girl friend's studious though not quite young brother that she had not even been to the races, and far from gallivanting there, quite truthfully was entrenched behind her dictionaries.

What heart-burnings and reproaches and apologies the letters carried! If we read them without knowledge of the intrigue behind them, we might fancy ourselves in Lesbos.

"Your friendship is the only happiness of my life," writes Mary to Anne; "and whenever I lose it, I have nothing to do but to take one of my garters and search for a convenient beam."

And Anne prostrates herself before Mary in repentance for her suspicions: "Henceforward I have done with all jealous tricks," she cries. But still they keep up reproach and appeal and apology; and both correspondents are delicately afraid of committing themselves too far or of being taken too seriously. Mary confesses that she scarce knows what she puts upon paper; she is dull, she is mad, she writes at random, she is agitated and nothing

but nonsense will come into her head. She is sure that Anne must think ill of her letters, and read strange things into them. She hopes that they are not really shown to any one, and that Anne's pretense is nothing but raillery.

So Mary and Edward have begun the great game of "playing for position," a game they play more ingeniously, more earnestly, more cautiously than any man and woman in history. Edward had less wit and subtlety than Mary; but he equaled her in tenacity. And after all, it is he who gains the first advantage. The suspicions he raised over the Nottingham races served their purpose. It is Mary who first breaks through the formal evasions of the correspondence and is compelled to make an explicit avowal. "To be capable of preferring the despicable wretch you mention," she writes, "to Mr. Wortley, is as ridiculous, if not criminal, as forsaking the Deity to worship a calf."

The correspondence must have given the amiable Anne a good deal of pleasure; she probably foresaw the end to it, though not even she could have guessed how long it would be before the end was reached.

Things seemed at first to be moving quite rapidly. Edward rode over to Thoresby soon after the "dictionaries and grammars" letter with a note from Anne and the loan of a packet of new books. He

was informed at the house that her ladyship was out, so turned his horse and rode away through the park. As he was nearing the boundary of the Forest, something light on the ground behind some foliage caught his eye. He fancied it was a woman, and dismounting saw that it was Mary sitting (as he thought most inadvisedly) on the grass in a shady arbor of trees, reading a book. She gave a startled cry when he spoke, for she had not heard him, and was indeed many hundreds of miles away in imagination, being plunged in *Ibrahim ou L'Illustre Pacha,* at the very point where the Sultan, in the absence of the noble hero, declares his evil and ungrateful passion to the lovely heroine.

Edward looped his reins over a bough, and in spite of misgivings about grass which might well be damp, and in any case was no suitable material for one of the higher order to recline on, threw himself down beside Mary. He was in an especially light-hearted mood and thought she looked charming. She was less self-possessed than usual, acutely conscious of the unimpressive nature of the very light reading she had stolen away to enjoy in secret, and wondering how she looked. She was not dressed at all, only in a light chintz sack over her petticoat and her head bare, like a serving wench in the early morning. But it was this very simplicity which

pleased Edward, who never saw a woman well dressed without shuddering to think what it must have cost some foolish man.

He took her hand, pressed it, and complimented her on her looks which, he was glad to see, in spite of the amount of study he heard she was doing, were unimpaired. Mary laughed and admitted then that at the moment he caught her she was diverting herself with a romance concerning the loves of Turks and Christians.

"I would hazard," said Edward, "that love fills the minds of men and maidens that come together, with never a thought for putting each other through either Christian or Mohammedan catechisms, but only that of the eye." And he looked at her very earnestly at this.

"So romance writers tell us," Mary replied, "but I think maidens do not love unless they may. I would as soon think of falling amorous of a Turk as of a married man."

"Then you are not in the fashion, madam," Edward said, coming a little closer.

"How should I be, that live so rustic?" asked Mary.

"Your eyes are fresher and your complexion the better for it."

"My conversation and my mind are the worse."

"Those are the admiration of all who know you," and he leaned still nearer.

"But admiration is not love," said Mary, who wondered how far he intended to go, and hoped he would take his cue.

"I know a Christian, and he not a married one neither, that will teach you different. 'Tis the animal creation alone that knows no ecstasies but carnal: we men are rational and woo with a phrase and are conquered with an eloquent dying surrender in words. We take the playhouse for our model, not the barnyard."

"And love as long as mummers do, for an hour, and then on with another suit."

"Have I not heard your friend the Bishop aver that words are eternal?"

"Yes, sir, but men live in a terrestrial and finite world, and words come from their lips and mount elsewhere."

"To reach where wise ladies live then."

"You are holding my hand too tightly," said Mary, who felt that things were going too fast if Edward was teasing her, and not fast enough if he were making love. She wished she had more experience in these matters, and as Edward instead of replying kissed her hand, she felt quite confused. She got up quickly, saying that she must dress.

Edward's face fell a little at this.

"I am very much at your service, madam," he said in as formal a way as possible. "Permit me to conduct you to the house."

Walking back, they talked of Anne, of Mary's studies, of Edward's own affairs, and of how the rabbits damaged the young trees. Only when they reached the terrace before the house itself, as he was ready to mount, Mary bade him warn Anne that she would come to drink tea with her a week from that day, and added that she hoped that she might then have the happiness of more conversation with Anne's brother. Edward replied that he had intended to leave for Newcastle before then and catch a boat back to London, but that he would delay until he had had the pleasure of seeing her again, though she put so low a price on the words that his sex most enjoyed uttering.

"You would not have me credulous, I trust?" she asked, and looked tenderly and mischievously into his eyes.

But she thought about him constantly after that: and Edward himself was conscious of feeling a new and troubling interest in his sister's pretty, witty friend whom, secretly, he already admired more than was good for his peace of mind.

But with September the time arrived for the two

exiled Pierrepoint girls to go up to town again, and this time for a long and—they hoped—more interesting visit. There was all the business of ordering the closing of Thoresby, the superintendence of linen closets, plate, furniture; the business of packing, of deciding which of their personal belongings that they needed should go in the wagon, what they must take with them in the coach; how many horses were needed for the journey; all the serious management before any one could set off, with pistols well loaded and menservants alert, through the country.

Hardly were they arrived in London and settled down there than news came that Mistress Anne Wortley had died of a sudden, relentless fever.

* * * * * * * *

When Mary saw Edward again, it was in London. He was in mourning, but very handsome mourning with a full, light brown wig, and a cambric shirt so fine that though he wore a plain cambric cravat and no ruffles at the wrists the effect was as delicate and pleasing as if he had worn lace. She caught only a glimpse of him. It reminded her painfully of Anne, for the likeness was quite extraordinary, Anne's firmness of feature and commanding carriage seeming in Edward a rather pensive, refined kind of masculine look, and their complexions alike for freshness.

Mary's brother William had taken up residence at Cambridge the previous autumn. Her sister Evelyn was generally now with Aunt Cheyne at the family seat in Buckinghamshire. Mary and Frances began by amusing themselves pretty well in London. They circumvented their father, who wanted to keep them indoors and forget they existed. They visited as many ladies as they could obtain permission to see, and now and then stole off excitedly to the theater. Then in the spring the Duke of Kingston suddenly decided that he must go to the Newmarket races with Godolphin, who needed a little relaxation after all the to-do over that most infamous High-Church rogue, Doctor Sacheverell. From there he could pay a visit to his son at the university if time permitted. But he would not take his daughters to the races; there were too many of his men friends there of the type of "Honest" Tom Wharton, Henry St. John, and the Duke of Shrewsbury, whom he judged likely to pay the kind of attentions to the girls that no father would willingly countenance. He decided to pack them off to his country villa at Acton.

Early one morning, in their little sitting-room in Arlington Street, Mary was bent over a book, Frances sighing over some stitches which she found she had to pick out of the embroidery she was

doing, when the door was flung open and their father, whom they seldom saw, strode into the room. Mary laid her book aside, Frances dropped her work, and both hastened forward to fling themselves dutifully on their knees and ask his blessing. He gave it with a slightly offended but impressive air. Whenever, in fact, he decided to do something which he knew would vex his daughters, he always took the offensive by seeming vexed, instead, with them.

The Duke made, ever so slightly, the gesture of raising his daughters from their humble position at his feet; they rose, however, unaided, and retreated backward as he advanced, brushed between them and stood at the window. He said nothing. The lucid spring sunshine, watery and cold, searched the fresh green of his velvet coat and blue stuff waistcoat, while above the folds of linen at his throat his plump, fatigued, handsome face showed traces of the hard drinking, late hours and excessive wenching for which he was notorious. His wig, like his hat and sword, he had not yet put on, and the close-shaven hair on his large skull bristled.

He rounded on them, caught Mary's glance of half-amused dismay at her sister, frowned and walked again to the door. Without turning, he stated coldly that they would leave for Acton the

following Tuesday and that they would take with them Mrs. Norton, Grace their maid, three footmen, the chef's assistant, and the worser coach. He had passed through the door and had vanished before he had completed his commands. Mary shut the door after him, and gave a mock curtsy.

The same afternoon, fairly late, the girls went driving and slowly made the round of the Ring in Hyde Park. After a little, Mary decided she positively needed to walk, and got out, following a little behind Frances and Lady Mary Creighton, who after drinking tea with them had accompanied them to take the air. The storms of rain which had spoiled the morning were gone now; the sun still shone. A score of gentlemen trotted in the Ring, most of them rolling an eye to see what ladies were out. Here and there a knot of fashionably-dressed gallants gossiped, and laughed loudly.

The Duchess of Marlborough bowled by in her resplendent coach, her head high and fires glowing in her glance; but she checked her coachman at the sight of the Pierrepoint ladies. The six magnificent bays scattered the sand with their twenty-four gleaming hoofs. Every one turned to look as she bent graciously and the girls paid their duty. Sidney, Earl Godolphin, with his face horribly marked by smallpox and heavy eyebrows half-way up his

Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough

After a portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller, photo by Donald Macbeth, London

forehead, sat opposite the Duchess, with old Bishop Burnet beside him. Of course Mary knew, as every one did, that the high fortunes of all three of them were in peril; they were still a great, glorious trio for all that.

The trouble had largely come about, long before the Sacheverell storm, by a back-stairs accident. The Tories had hardly closed an eye since Queen Anne ascended the throne; nothing escaped them. But who could ever have suspected that the worm-like, sluttish Abigail Hill would successfully climb over the back of her great relative the Duchess of Marlborough to her present post at the Queen's ear?

Only a few weeks ago there had been private mutterings and public dissatisfaction because this creature, who hated the Marlboroughs to whom she owed everything, had craftily persuaded the Queen to insist that the Duke should put her brother, Mr. Hill, in command of a regiment. There was a place left vacant by the death of the Earl of Essex; but the thing was preposterous. Dozens of officers in the Army were senior to him, dozens more meritorious. But the Queen demanded that Mr. Hill be given command, nevertheless. Of course the idea did not come from her, nor originally from Abigail, the beggarly thing. That arch-priest of Tory craft, Robert Harley, had engendered the scheme, and

knew it caught Marlborough in a cleft stick. For if he made Hill a colonel every one would say he had advanced his own relatives over the heads of better and older men; if he did not, then the split that had been coming for two years now between himself and his wife and the Sovereign would be ominously hastened. Queen Anne, almost every inch unqueenly, at least was Stuart enough to be stone-obstinate and to insist on her few and usually stupid commands being obeyed.

The Duke had gone to Holland in a fury. The Duchess had departed weeks ago to her residence at Windsor, not to be compelled to wait on the Queen any longer; and had only come to London that one day to show herself. It was war to the knife between her and the Tories now, and they, like her, knew the victory theirs. But she held her beautiful head high, did Sarah Jennings, the gold of her own lovely hair undimmed by the years, her complexion as rose as ever, her expression as frank and winning as she leaned a little forward that spring day to drop a gracious word to the Pierrepoint ladies. Riders checked their mounts and passed slowly to see the Queen's rejected favorite closer; strollers lingered near; a clergyman bowed low, and seeing the Bishop, bowed lower. A couple of beggars came whining up, an orange girl bawled her wares and

thrust a spray or two of rosemary bunched together through the coach-window. The postilions pulled her away and cuffed her. The Duchess signed to the coachman to continue, and bowled away—not, however, as had been her custom, to Kensington, where the Queen was.

Mary had a particular and private adoration for the Duchess of Marlborough, who had done what she herself wished most some day to do. She had ruled. Lady Mary Creighton in her rather elderly, spinsterish way was getting tired of the little exercise they had had, and wanted to go back to their coach. Lady Frances, who was easily pleased with anything, was petting the toy spaniel she lately had insisted on carrying everywhere with her.

They turned back and headed for the coach, all three abreast now, but a little apart because of the width of their skirts, and stepping leisurely because of the fragility of their slim, colored shoes. Down a little alleyway some distance off, a man came hurrying toward them with the orange girl who had plagued them before running beside him.

"Why, here is 'the Macedon,'" cried Frances, and laughed. And a moment later Mr. Edward Wortley Montagu, meeting the ladies, bowed to them. Lady Mary Creighton in her capacity of duenna curtsied stiffly and continued, Lady Frances

paid him a mischievous greeting, Lady Mary lingered just a second, long enough to hear that the news of their departure for Acton had reached him, and for him to convey that he was grieved. It would not have been decorous, or even safe for her, under the circumstances, to talk with him long, and indeed such an idea never occurred to her. She gave him, however, an amiable look; he returned it by a languishing one which seemed to have something more sincere about it than the formal admiration which every gentleman owed any lady.

At the coach, the orange girl, reinforced by another of her kind, a dark handsome slut with a gipsy look about her, clamored around them. Mary stayed to buy their fruit. The gipsy girl implored her to take more, which made her very angry, but while she was rating the creature the other girl muttered something which she did not seem to care to hear, for it concerned Mr. Wortley. She mounted into the coach, and fancied her companions looked at her with a peculiar air. She peeled a fine mandarin orange as unconcernedly as she could.

She would have been more concerned had she known that the orange woman, as soon as they had trotted away, sped back to Mr. Wortley Montagu and exchanged a fairly long and private conversation with him.

That evening an unusual messenger, no other than the orange girl of the Park, called at the Duke of Kingston's house in Arlington Street and asked for Lady Mary. A footman, who left the wild-looking creature outside, and the front door ajar, went to find her and ask if she would see the girl. Another footman lolling on a settee in the hall sprang to his feet as the master of the house himself, coming in, aimed a cuff at the orange girl, whom he abused soundly, but not so soundly as the footman for letting her stand at the door of his house. Excuse offered, his Grace demanded even more contemptuously what traffic the girl could possibly have with Lady Mary. Finally, by threats and shakings and half throwing the orange girl to the ground in his rage, he intercepted a letter.

This, after the manner of fathers on such occasions, he opened and read. It was only a scribble without preamble or signature, expressing devotion, and proclaiming extreme grief at the departure of some one for the country.

The result, after the expulsion of the fruit woman, was a sudden order from the Duke, the lighting of many candles and four torches, the hastening to and fro of serving-maids, packing, an order for a coach, and, despite the darkness and renewed rain, the forced departure of Lady Mary and

Lady Frances, bundled up in cloaks over their fine dresses, for Acton, in charge of a well-primed Mrs. Norton. They arrived at Acton many hours later, cold, tired and rebellious. That the letter had been sent by Mr. Montagu, or that the orange girl pretended it came from him, both the girls guessed though neither confessed it, not even to their furious and threatening father.

CHAPTER IV

A PECULIAR CORRESPONDENCE

Mary believed in taking everything philosophically, but found it hard to act up to her belief. Especially did she find it hard in this case. She was more intellectually than emotionally intrigued by Edward Wortley Montagu: at least her interest expressed itself in her thoughts rather than in her feelings, partly because she had a horror of suffering emotion to disturb her, partly because she had a mass of indefinite ambition within her and sought a means of gratifying it and her natural instincts at the same time. The means presented itself through Mr. Montagu. If he would love her and marry her, she would marry him and love him: it was as deliberate as that. And through him she would enter, with the freedom of a married woman, a world very much more attractive than the kind of nursery in which she was now, and always would be under her father's care, mewed up.

Her secret thoughts were so very concise, so very practical, that she often felt a trifle ashamed of their

lack of romantic or shyly feminine quality and hurriedly suffused them with a little playful emotion.

There was a certain genuineness of feeling in their intimacy, of course. Edward, from his half-joking conversations with Mary about her admirers, the summer before when they met frequently in the country, had come to notice her sharply, and counted up every look, every formal politeness she paid to other men. From looking he had grown jealous and, as is often the case, had not realized that her surrender was necessary to his peace until he perceived how jealous he had grown.

Mary, who had always admired him, was very naturally flattered to perceive his eyes always on her, and her perceptions were shrewd enough for her to realize how their early friendship had begun to verge on something else, which soon became a troubling though cold attachment. It is hard for a woman not to care a little for a man she admires, the moment he shows that he cares a little for her.

Long before Anne died, Mary had been perfectly aware that Edward was wooing her, disguised in Anne's letters, and more openly when, on quite a few occasions, he met her. She wished indeed that they met oftener. A spirit of peculiarly tender feminine mischief had impelled her to enter into the affair, at first a joke, so soon serious.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

From a plumbago drawing, probably by Liotard, photo by Donald Macbeth, London

They had always been on their guard with each other. Even now Mary was not sure whether Edward was wholly serious. At times it looked from his letters as though he were taking pains to insult her, and to prove that all the advances came from her side; and he was always prudent enough to leave himself a line of honorable withdrawal. He kept everything very much in the air. His protestations were conditional: if Lady Mary was perfectly docile and considerate (which he could not expect) they would get on well together (though this was obviously impossible).

When Mary replied, with equal reserve, he pointed out to her that she was too cool and calculating to have any real affection for him. When she expressed her esteem for him, he begged her never again to descend to such insincerities. If she defended herself against his accusations, he took it as a proof that he would never be allowed to speak his mind. If she accused him in her turn, he swore that he was glad to find out from her own words how little value she set upon him. If she allowed that he had reason for his fault-finding, he became gloomily triumphant and protested that there was no hope for them unless she changed her nature, and the fact that she could so easily see and confess her faults showed that she had no desire to reform them.

Edward was playing for an absolute, unequivocal declaration of love. He wished to be able to preserve his own freedom and stake nothing in return. Perhaps if Mary committed herself without the possibility of escape, declared her undying passion for him, if she made an unconditional surrender and flung herself on his mercy, he would take no advantage of her weakness. He would then negotiate on a treaty of love: for he looked on himself as a man of generosity, who spared the conquered and was able to forget the victory.

But, to tell the truth, Mary was *not* pining away from incurable passion. She had become a self-possessed young lady, with some knowledge of the tactics of intrigue and with quite as clear an eye for the main chance as Mr. Wortley Montagu. She committed herself as far as she thought would suffice to bring Edward to commit himself too. And if she had been engaging with a less wary opponent, she would have succeeded easily; for she had a persuasive air of frankness in her repertory of attitudes.

It was with a good deal of distrust that Edward wrote letters in his own hand to Mary. He was suspicious of her fluency and wit in writing, and he felt that he was being taken off his own ground. It cost him hours of labor to write a letter, and even

after he had made alterations and amendments and redrafts and fair copies he was never quite satisfied that he had expressed himself with sufficient dignity. He thought, however, that Mary might pin herself down more firmly in writing than in speech; and he was caught firmly enough in the emotional tension they had created to wish to try every means to gain the day.

He wrote a letter which, on the face of it, was surly and discouraging.

"It is a great defect in me that my temper is directly contrary to what yours seems to be. You will be very unhappy if you choose one that is not pleased with a variety of friends, or that cannot bear to see others pretend to admire you. I own to you the way of living together that so many are delighted with, is what I can't think of with any patience, and if we differ we must live asunder. 'Tis my unhappiness that I avoid the company of those I see ready but to dispute with me; when I am tied to them but for a day it is a pennance. And how can I think of continuing with you as long as I live when you have given me any just cause of complaint?

"Were you a thousand times more charming than you are, you would be in the wrong to think of liv-

ing well with a reasonable man for whose sake you could not seem to forget you know how to please others as well as him. If you consider well your own temper, you will find it can never receive so great an alteration. Would you not be the most imprudent woman on earth to leave your present condition, and lose the prospect of rich offers, and go to one with whom you have so small a chance of being easy?

"Now I dare own to you that I think you can never suit with one like myself. Do you imagine I cannot calmly reflect on everything I have at any time understood to be against me? And where could I live with you till you had forgot all the acquaintance I have ever wished you had not, or till your beauty was past? These are objections against your living with me that you may possibly answer, but I fear you cannot. . . ."

Mary dared not reply immediately. It was a letter very hard to answer; obviously the reply that Mr. Montagu craved was an explicit announcement:

"Dear Edward, I love you beyond measure, and love you exactly as you are. I have no will in the world but to adapt myself to your pleasure; and I should count it unseemly of myself to attempt to criticize you, disagree with you, or in any way to

show myself independent of your control. Do with me as you choose; I am utterly in your power. I am a woman: you are a man. I know that I must always look to you for guidance and, besides, my happiness would consist in obeying you."

But Mary had no mind to surrender on terms like these.

It was a grave step, in any case, to write a letter to him now that there was no cloak for her modesty. Perhaps Mary did not quite recognize the exact process which led her, soon after arriving in Acton, to take a definite step. But she did determine at last to write a letter to her admirer, if admirer he frankly intended to be.

Beating about the bush had never appealed to Mary. And in that first letter she wrote Edward she pinned him down promptly to a declaration he had, on an impulse, made her. It amused her, even, to force the issue, though indeed she did not wholly know what she was doing, but acted, of course, by instinct when she fancied she was led by reason.

And what did Edward think of her letter? He had not time to consider it unmaidenly. Because he had thought about marrying her, he was not surprised at her being serious about it. She stung

him, sorely, with her philosophizing about his humors. He wrote back angrily in a letter that seemed an admission but was no more than hers.

"I ever believed the compleatest plan of felicity we are acquainted with, was to enjoy one woman friend, one man, and to think it of little moment whether those that were made use of to fill up some idle hours, were princes or peasants, wise or foolish. Had I you, I should have at one view all the charms of either sex met together. I should enjoy a perpetual succession of new pleasures, a constant variety in one. I never was fond of money, and in the humour I am I have a quarrel to it. As much as I value you, I wish there was no possibility of your having any. For then perhaps you would not say I must either not have you, or not think of you. . . . Could you really love me we should both be happy beyond all example. Should you once seem to love me, and after that cease to do it, we should, I fear, be wretched in as high a degree.

"This I write now only out of Punctilio, and not with the vanity of hoping for success."

What could be more charming or more human, really, than that a lady should write a love-letter to say how clearly she perceived she was sure the gen-

tleman would never suit her, or that the gentleman should insist that he was positive they would never get on. There is a great deal of tenderness in the two comic letters. They both knew they were bit.

Once they had begun in this vein, they adopted it permanently. All that summer letters were flying to and fro from Acton to Bloomsbury and back again. Mary was for ever insisting that she didn't love luxury, and was not a flirt, but that she quite realized Edward would never understand her; Edward constantly wrote back to say he was sure she could never be content with what he had to offer her and regretting it, and—without saying so—begging her to declare an overwhelming passion for him so that he might have the excuse of loving her freely. That, very naturally, she was reluctant to do. No woman likes to have a man sure of her: men can not be trusted with such a knowledge.

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The correspondence continued, for all Mary's unbreakable resolutions. And suddenly something happened which hastened on the affair considerably: Mary fell ill of the measles. A note from Mary's maid informed Mr. Wortley of the illness; and expressed a little warmly Mary's regrets that she was too feverish to write herself, giving him her "love and respects," and desiring him to send her a

letter. Perhaps Mary winked at her maid's zeal; perhaps she even suggested it; but she made it easy to disown responsibility.

The note was put in the hands of Mr. Steele, who forwarded it to Edward, endorsed:

"This is left here to-night with me to send to you. I send you no news because I believe this will employ you better.

"Your most obedient servant,

"Richd. Steele."

Edward replied at once. Mary's illness made him tenderer and more forward than usual.

"Tho' last night I was perfectly well till I got the letter signed by you, I am this morning down-right sick. Had there been any such thing as sympathy that is occasioned by grief, I should have been sensible of it when you first felt ill. I had grieved at your illness, tho' I had been sure you hated me. An aversion may possibly be removed, but the loss of you would be irretrievable. There has not yet been, there never will be, another Lady Mary. . . .

"I am not in the least concerned to fancy your colour may receive some alteration. I should be over-joyed to hear your Beauty is very much im-

paired, could I be pleased with anything that would give you displeasure, for it would lessen the number of Admirers. But even the loss of a feature, nay, of your eyes themselves, would not make you less beautiful to——"

Hard on the heels of this letter, which Betty the orange girl delivered, Mr. Wortley himself called at Acton to inquire after the health of Lady Mary. He was received coldly by the dragon housekeeper and dismissed. And Mary soon sent him a seemingly angry note, upbraiding him bitterly for his call and for sending Betty, who had let all the household suspect her business. At the same time, in quite a confusion, she withdraws all she has written.

"I was born to be unfortunate and shall complain of my destiny without complaining of you. Forgive and forget me, and it is all I have to require."

Edward was practised in love-affairs and promptly wrote again: for he had in justice to himself to point out that he had only given Betty letters in reply to those the girl had brought him from Mary herself, and it was Mary's idea, really, to use Betty so much as a go-between. But the occasion has

worked on him seriously. He seems to be turning with more gravity to the question of marriage. He objects only to declaring himself openly her suitor before he is sure whether Mary and he will be congenial companions

"To take the best method of gaining you before I am convinced I may probably make you happy, is the only command of yours I can disobey."

But Mary, for her part, was not willing he should escape so easily: she pressed her charge that he had already compromised her.

"Your indiscretion has given me so much trouble, I would willingly get rid of it at the price of my fever's returning. You employ the foolishest and most improper messenger upon earth. She has prattled all she knows and all she supposed, which goes a great deal farther. 'Tis not her custom to make secrets of names. Everything is known but my Innocence, which is never to be cleared. . . .

"I am mighty happy at Mr. St. [Steele] and his wife knowing this affair; he over a bottle and she over a tea-table has (I don't question) said many witty things on this occasion."

And this time she is growing more frank in her maneuvering.

"Either think of me no more," she ends, "or think in the way you ought."

Edward still appeals to her for some pledge of kindliness and devotion. Mary still puts him off, and desires him to sue unconditionally for her hand, if he sues at all.

"One part of my character is not so good, nor t'other so bad, as you fancy it. Should we ever live together, you would be disappointed both ways; you would find an easy equality of temper you do not expect, and a thousand faults you do not imagine. You think, if you married me, I should be passionately fond of you one month, and of somebody else the next: neither would happen. I can esteem, I can be a friend, but I don't know whether I can love. . . .

"Make no answer to this, if you can like me on my own terms; 'tis not to me you must make proposals."

And again she writes that correspondence between them is growing more and more difficult, she is being sent down to Wiltshire. His conduct has laid her open to such suspicions that even one further attempt to write to her will ruin her.

"You say you do not think to break off. If you do

not, 'tis only to my Family you must speak. I can now hear no more from you, nor can I make you any other answer than what they are pleased to direct."

And so, rather unwillingly, Edward Wortley Montagu addressed himself to the Duke of Kingston, and asked for the hand of his daughter Mary.

His decision may have come more readily because he, too, had fallen ill, and Mary had written to him sympathetically, professing alarm and tenderness.

At first, nothing seemed simpler. It would not be a brilliant match for her, but it was quite a suitable one. Mr. Montagu was well connected, and even was next heir to a fine estate. His father was regarded as a warm man, and there were no other brothers. The Pierrepoint lawyers and the Montagu lawyers sharpened their quills, and began, with infinite dallying, retractions, hemmings and hints, to draw up a rough outline of the bargain.

Mary's brother William was already on the verge of being betrothed to wealthy Miss Baynton, who would bring him a considerable portion, and this, the Duke of Kingston thought, would make a tolerable amount to give as marriage portion with his daughter Mary. Mr. Montagu had the right to expect a good round sum with her, naturally.

Unfortunately when it came down to details, while no objection was being raised by Mr. Montagu's lawyers to his giving pin-money to his future wife—newfangled idea though this was—they did protest at the Duke's lawyers insisting that Mr. Wortley's estates and moneys should be entailed on his heir by Lady Mary. Mr. Wortley, who was a stubborn creature, had very definite ideas about the way things should be arranged and it so happened that he had a particular detestation of the whole principle of entail. The Duke of Kingston insisted, simply insisted, that entailed the estate must be. Lawyers argued with lawyers to no purpose.

Mr. Montagu dined with Mary's father, drank his port. They got on well, politically they were as one, they had mutual friends and common interests. But stretch his legs under the Duke of Kingston's table—a most excellent table—as often as he might, no port could mellow Mr. Montagu's objection to entail. In the end the Duke in his cups beat his fist on the table and roared out great oaths that by Gad and the rest of it he was most emphatically not going to live to see his grandchildren beggars: it was entail or nothing.

Mr. Montagu, who, unlike his host, went white instead of red when he had drunk a couple of bottles, was not so noisy but just as firm. Father and

suitor were politely insulting to each other. Mr. Montagu with a pretty steady and very well contrived bow conveyed what he thought of his Grace, and his Grace, less steady but always imposing, bowed out his guest with every air of thinking him a damned scoundrel as well as a blockhead.

But the young couple had gone too far to break off with each other for a father's wishes, and the secret correspondence went on. Something unyielding in both of them fought for its own defense. They were both caught in a net they could not struggle out of, and did not wholly wish to break.

Mary often asked herself why she was so put out by every letter the captious Edward sent her, especially as many of the things he said hurt her immensely and gave her disagreeable sensations and flutterings that made her feel sick and trembling. Things were not going at all as she had expected, and she was by no means mistress of the situation. Now and then she had a sudden impulse to break off with him for ever, but the impulse always faded and changed to a lingering hope that all would yet be well before she could act on it. Once she plucked up spirit to reprove him, when he used his professions of love as excuse for every kind of exacting behavior:

"People talk of being in love just as widows do of affliction. Mr. Steele has observed in one of his plays, the most passionate among them have always calmness enough to drive a hard bargain with the upholders. I never knew a lover that would not willingly secure his interest as well as his mistress; or if one must be abandoned, had not the prudence (among all his distractions) to consider a woman was but a woman, and money a thing of more real merit than the whole sex put together. Your letter is to tell me you should think yourself undone if you married me; but if I would be so tender as to confess I should break my heart if I did not, then you'd consider whether you would or no; but yet you hoped I should not."

She implied that she had perfectly understood the secret reasons for his holding off: and showed him by her words in all the ungracious light of a man who loves a lady, but not enough to marry her unless he can marry money too. Obviously Edward's honor was outraged: he felt impelled to reply at once that he adored her and would run off with her to-morrow. But his was not that kind of nature. Things had to be thought over. Perhaps after all he would rather not marry her, the plaguing thing with a tongue like a needle and a pen sharp as a sword. He

would write again, try to explain himself and bring her to reason.

But Edward was far from understanding the motives that impelled him to write so often and write so ungraciously to Mary. He was extremely suspicious of her artful spontaneity: he doubted if she had it in her to be sincere. And he definitely desired to subdue her, bring her to his feet suing for love. Both Mary and Edward, as a matter of fact, were more deeply concerned with cutting a good figure to each other and to themselves, and with the rather attractive, dangerous, romantic love-affair they were engaged in, than they were with each other's feelings. They were practically strangers.

Soon after being refused as a suitor by the Duke of Kingston, Edward went abroad, and sipping the curative waters at Spa, decided to forget Mary. Mary, penned up closely at West Dean, her dead grandmother's house in Wiltshire, went on industriously writing to him. As Steele, who was charged with keeping care of Edward's correspondence, had been told not to forward anything, her letters went unanswered.

She wrote six letters to him in two months and heard no news at all—not even as much as to know where he was. It drove her near to despair to see how easily he could leave her alone, especially as she

had told her sister Frances and more than one of her best friends how totally her prisoner he was. She had never meant to offend him outright; all the while he had seemed her best road to the kind of freedom she wanted. She could ill afford to lose him, and the last letter of the six was an open plea.

"I cannot imagine the reason of your silence, and I am perpetually thinking of it without being able to guess whence it should probably proceed. . . . Have you forgot me so entirely that you no longer remember there is such a creature in the world? I am torn with a variety of imaginations, and not one pleasing one. I conjure you to write, I beg it of you, and promise to tease you no longer upon the least intimation of being troublesome. 'Tis impossible to express the pain I write in, when I neither know whether you received my letter, or into whose hands it may fall."

Among foreign faces and new scenes Edward had managed to tranquillize himself. He came back determined that there should no longer be any nonsense about the situation. Mary should hear his complaints, and decide once for all whether she was willing to satisfy him. He was extremely pleased with himself for his fortitude in keeping silent so

long, as he was convinced that this assertion of independence would have been a lesson to the lady. In a way he would really have been glad to be rid of the whole transaction; but if he found it dangerous and disagreeable to continue writing (and he certainly feared the Duke's vengeance if he were caught) he found it also impossible to leave off. He wrote her one of his surliest and most dictatorial letters.

"I can assure you, it is the most rash thing you can do to meddle with me unless you are pretty secure we shall live as well together as it is possible. I am one of those that could not bear to live with you unless I were treated as well as any man was. I should choose to let our disagreeing be made publick rather than feel the burden of it at home."

But, good tactician as he thought himself, it was precisely here that he made his greatest mistake. If he could have contrived an air of generosity, if he could have been touched by the pathos of the six letters Mary had written while he was away, she would have entered gladly into a mood more tender and more affectionate, more submissive than ever before. She had suffered a great fright; she had seen the lover who intrigued her most slipping through her fingers, and herself doomed to remain

in her old tedium or be sold off to some totally unsympathetic bidder of her father's circle. And she was alarmed to realize how plainly she had betrayed herself. Indeed she had made it possible for Edward to say with truth, if he chose (and she had a fancy that almost every man was capable of saying almost anything about women in his cups), that the Duke of Kingston's daughter was pining and fretting away for love of him, but that he fancied the bookish beauty so little as a wife that he would have none of her. She thought of things like that at night and would then write him letters which afterward she tore up.

But if the first effect of his show of strength was to make her feel humiliated and angry, when she read his letter again she began to grow more confident. She was reassured. Edward had not slipped so completely out of her grasp as she had feared; at least he was still compelled to justify himself to her, to go on writing, to play fascinatedly with the thought of marrying her. He went on from blunder to blunder. He was anxious to prove his newly-acquired independence, and he wrote a sentence which would have put him wrong with any woman: "You can't wonder if so long an absence, variety of other acquaintance, and your unkindness, should make me less forward than I have been."

In replying, Mary took up the weapon heaven had sent her, and made full use of it to retrieve her position.

"Indeed, I do not wonder at all that absence and variety of new faces should make you forget me; but I am a little surprised at your curiosity to know what passes in my heart (a thing wholly insignificant to you) except you propose to yourself a piece of ill-natured satisfaction, in finding me very disquieted. . . .

"I begin to be tired of my humility."

And so, through Edward's inability to make a gracious gesture, he had lost the chance of accepting Mary's new mood and reinforcing it. She had recovered her own defenses. Affairs were precisely where they were when Edward went abroad. They continued to bicker on paper and said farewell for ever once a week.

Edward was growing distrustful of his not very nimble pen, and thought that a change of ground might be to his advantage. He wrote now begging her to meet him by stealth in order that they might talk over their affairs more conveniently than they could by correspondence. After all, he had met her often enough up north while his sister was alive.

But the gardens of Thoresby and London were two very different places; and her hand had been refused him. Of course he and she saw each other occasionally at the formal At Homes of Lady Wharton, the Duchess of Shrewsbury, and other hostesses, and they heard of each other's movements frequently. Although she could and did exchange a few words with him at the houses of the ladies they both visited, nothing of an intimate nature could well be discussed in rooms full of people—and people, too, who delighted in nothing more than detecting an intrigue. So Edward begged her to meet him at one of the common rendezvous of a less decorous nature, one of the China houses in the city, or at Corticelli's Italian warehouse in Suffolk Street, or her milliner's, at any of which it was quite easy to hire a little up-stairs room. It was in places like these that the fashionable ladies and gentlemen of the time often came together; it would have caused a considerable scandal had Mary been known to meet an admirer privately at one of them. She refused. She was not in any case going to give Edward an opportunity of throwing *that* in her teeth later on.

At last it was arranged that she should make friends with Mrs. Steele so that she might have the excuse to visit at their house and meet Edward there.

The Steeles had long known about the whole affair. But while Steele and the Duke of Kingston were as friendly as could be at the coffee-house, they were not on terms of social equality, and Mary felt excessively ashamed when at last she plucked up courage to tell her sister Frances that she proposed calling on Mrs. Steele. Of course she hardly ever went out alone, for the excellent reason that no unmarried girl of any position at all ever did. Frances was curious, suspicious, sarcastic: she agreed however to accompany Mary, to ask no questions, and to say nothing to any one about it.

The lovers met alone, in a little sitting-room at the Steeles'. Mrs. Steele, very much impressed by a visit from so great a young lady, curtsied her in. Mary was agitated, rather ashamed. Edward, less sensitive and in any case thoroughly at home in the house, did not understand her mood, thought her arch and cold, but found himself admiring her more than ever. The conversation was not very successful. Edward asked her to elope with him; she said she dared not and he urged her no further, much to her disappointment, for she would have gone with him there and then had he known.

And all the rest of that year 1711 Lady Mary and Edward continued to exchange their peculiar letters. The newest circumstance was a fever-heat of

jealousy from Edward. He had seen her with somebody at the Play, at the Trial of Doctor Sacheverell, at the Ball, at a bull-baiting in the Park, at the Assemblies and the Operas. "'Twould be useless to reckon up all the passages that gave me pain." Mary and her admirer had hardly ever been absent from the same social functions.

"Whether I am likely to think of marrying you in case you would condescend to take one so contemptible as I should be, after such proofs (for you must own they are no longer suspicions), 'tis not for one in my condition to guess. You can judge better than I how far my reason is able to resist my Passion."

And of course, Mary did look elsewhere now and then. She did not mean to deny herself the conversation of any agreeable young men whom she could meet in general company, at least not unless she was sure of a husband. She had every excuse for being uncertain about Edward; certainly she could not afford to stake all her hopes on him in his present humor. Then, too, with his quarrels and qualms, he was enough to drive any one to some light flirtation. There were times when Mary fell so low in her own esteem through his rough treatment of her that she

doubted whether she could ever win love or even interest a man. It raised her confidence to set herself small trials and win small victories.

But in her letters to Edward she repudiated his charges with a fair show of indignation:

"I will do myself the satisfaction of solemnly protesting to you (since it is the last time I shall say anything to you) that Gentleman has no interest in my Heart, nor ever endeavoured having any. I have often seen him making Love to another, which I suppose he would not have done before my face, had he any design upon me. His coming to A—— was wholly without my knowledge, neither was it to wait upon me, but those that came with him. Here's enough of this matter."

She found it hard to pacify him. "To think I shall believe you," he writes, "is concluding me a fool; to write it when you fancy I shall not, proves you take me to be unworthy of the lowest degree of your friendship." He takes leave of her with dignity. "Adieu, dearest L. M., this once be assured you will not deceive me."

The breach was a little more serious than usual this time. They corresponded briefly and at comparatively long intervals. Edward's jealousy at last

Bartholomew Fair, Smithfield, London

From a painting by Rowlandson in Eighteenth Century in London, B. T. Batsford Co., London

burned down through having nothing to feed on, and they began to write freely again. Now and then they met, exchanged a few words. Once she stole away and met him at Coleman's toyshop, which was even more famous as a rendezvous than for its pretty Chinese knickknacks, fans and trinkets. She was considerably flustered and more so by the avid way in which Edward kissed her hand. She would stay with him alone for only a few minutes.

Another evening greatly daring, and only after the most burning pleas from Edward who threatened to declare his passion for her publicly at the Duchess of Shrewsbury's unless she would do as he wanted, she told her family she was going to bed with a sick stomach, and a little later crept out the back way, crept into a chair, whispered to a shadowy figure waiting patiently at the street corner for her, and, reassured it was Edward himself, let herself be borne off all the long distance to Clerkenwell.

She wrinkled her brow at the poverty of the place he brought her to, no better than a shed; but, reassured by a squeeze from her escort, she ventured to make her way through the darkness of a coal cellar dimly lighted by a lantern, and, clutching her skirts, felt her way up a ladder into a loft. There was a little more light here, and she pulled her hood right down over her face in a fright on seeing several gen-

tlemen and ladies of fashion sitting on rude benches in the poor, low-ceilinged room. At the end with several candles set on a harpsichord some queer-looking men were grouped around a stand with music set on it. One tuned up a viol, another was running his bow over a 'cello.

Edward pulled Mary to a seat in the darkest corner, and, holding her hand and bidding her not be alarmed, told her in a whisper that this was the home of the famous coal-peddler and musician Thomas Britton, most fashionable resort of the fashionable dilettanti in London. She herself recognized in a second plain figure Mr. Handel, the German prodigy, while the figure at the harpsichord was Pepusch.

Mary's heart beat fast. She had never done anything so bold as this before, and found she was enjoying herself, though feeling strangely agitated.

The music began. Smoke stung her eyelids, but she felt happy, and listened raptly to the divine melodies that filled the long low loft.

Mr. Steele, near the musicians, nodded to Edward. He was in the secret, of course, and knew who the hooded lady was.

When they ceased, the room was still. Then Lord Burlington rose and went to converse with a lady Mary did not know, sitting over against Congreve.

Edward, as soon as he heard a murmur of conversation, fell to talking to Mary. His words were studied, but she thought sincere. He reminded her that a woman left her father's care when she loved, followed a new master. He bade her be bold; she shook her head and whispered that she would never dare. Edward replied then that he must be bold for both of them: he continued with vows of devotion, on certain conditions. She pressed his hand by way of response. The music began afresh.

When, an hour after, she stole down the steep ladder again, Edward vowing no one had guessed who she was, she shivered in the night air, dreading lest her absence should have been discovered. Her lover promised to wait under the window in Arlington Street: she would wave a candle across it three times if all were well. At this she felt calmer, and rather to her own surprise made no objection at all when Edward handed her into a coach, gave directions to the footmen who were to guard it and the others who should walk before it to light the way, and followed her into the vehicle. It seemed natural enough that he should sit close to her, put an arm behind her to shield her from the shock of bumps over the foul road. By the time they had got back to her home, Edward and Mary understood each other a little better, or so both of them thought.

But after she had crept in, and waved the promised candle three times across the window to show her lover waiting below that all was well, Mary blushed deeply to think of the innocent indiscretions that she had permitted him. Then she smiled. That he entertained the warmest regard for her she knew, at last, definitely.

All this time the Duke of Kingston, who, because he himself was courting again, fell in a mood to marry all his children off, was treating with another and more amenable young gentleman from Ireland, who also wished to marry the oldest Pierrepoint lady. Mary was in two minds. In fact she was bound to obey her father, who had the absolute right to dispose of her hand. At the same time she was resolved to do as she wished, but did not know what that was. If only Edward had not been so very captious, so argumentative, so fault-finding, she would have run away with him despite her father. She resolved to be married to the Irish suitor. She knew she never could, for he was most uninteresting. She wrote once more to Edward.

Early the next year Edward made another offer for Lady Mary and was again refused. The Irish gentleman had meanwhile finished treating and was already the prospective husband of Mary. Mary explained to Edward in a long letter that her father

refused to listen to any argument, and that she was so much afraid of him she must do what he wished, otherwise he would send her away to be locked up in some lonely country spot as a punishment.

"The wisest thing I can do, is to do whatever you please. . . . You may manage in a manner to make me passionately fond of you . . . the Bias of my heart is in your Favour. I hate the man they propose for me. . . . I can think with pleasure of giving you with my first declaration of Love the sincerest proof of it. I read over some of your first Letters, and I formed romantic scenes to myself of Love and Solitude. I did not believe I was capable of thinking this way, but I find it is in your power to make me think what you please.

"I know if I do not venture all things to have you, I shall repent it."

At last with that letter Mary had done what Edward had always pressed for. He pushed his advantage; wanted more secret meetings. Could she trust the gay Duchess of Shrewsbury, who liked him? or would she come again to Mrs. Steele's?

She went again to Mrs. Steele's, because she was terribly afraid of her father hearing of her wickedness. She flung herself into Edward's arms. Yet

thinking over the scene afterward, she fancied he had taken just too little advantage of her presence or too much of her declaration and she felt he had been critical though forward, difficult though irresistible. She rode home in a turmoil. She had promised to elope with him.

All the same, having made her decision, she at once became infinitely more tractable and charming. The specter of the Irish gentleman was always before her, and, besides, she determined quite genuinely to make the utmost out of her passion for Edward. She wrote in a new vein to him:

"If we marry, our happiness must consist in loving one another; 'tis principally my concern to think of the most probable method of making that love eternal. . . . I am willing to abandon all conversation but yours. If you please, I will never see another man. In short, I will part with everything for you, but you; I will not have you a month, to lose you for the rest of my life. If you can pursue the plan of happiness begun with your friend, and take me for that friend, I am yours."

She spent great pains in trying to please her lover. She knew how completely she was throwing herself on his mercy, for her father had sworn not to give

her a penny if she refused to marry the Irishman. "I shall come to you," she wrote, "with only a night-gown and a petticoat, and that is all you will get with me."

At first Edward, who prided himself on his judgment rather than his feelings, was a little aghast at seeing his hopes so near to realization. He still wrote to her in a fractious vein; and (what was worse) made a display of self-righteousness in keeping his faith.

"However, I do not intend to go back on my word (whatever low opinion you may have of me)." He would still point out how despondent their prospects were:

"If we should once get into a coach, let us not say one word till we come before the parson, lest we should engage in fresh disputes."

But nothing he could say put Mary out of countenance. She replied devotedly. In the end her serenity and even temper won him round, and he had conveyed to her a letter of unequivocal love.

"I can no longer forbear laying my heart quite

open, and telling you the joy I am in for being so near the greatest happiness I am capable of enjoying. . . . I shall wish to dye with you rather than to live without you in the highest circumstances of Fortune."

Conditions at home were more difficult than ever. Her sister Evelyn, for whom she did not care much, and with whom she had never been intimate, was now being married to Lord Gower. When they were all gathered together for the nuptial ceremony, the Duke of Kingston unfortunately heard of the mishap that had lately befallen his friend Walpole's sister Dolly, Mary's especial friend. This made him redouble his severity and the degree of surveillance imposed on Frances and Mary: so that it became increasingly difficult for Mary to send letters to Edward, positively dangerous to receive them from him (though of course she did so, notwithstanding), and practically impossible for her to go anywhere save in the charge of Aunt Cheyne or some eagle-eyed matron of her sort.

Dolly Walpole had been for a while on terribly bad terms with her sister-in-law, especially since she had been brought up to town to see if a husband could be found for her. Mrs. Walpole was seriously jealous of Dolly's little successes, and most spiteful

to her. Mary, who was fond of Dolly, used to see her often and always urged her to pay no attention to the pin-pricks to which she was subjected.

Then, when Robert Walpole was absent on affairs of state and Dolly very sad because some mischief-making on the part of Mrs. Walpole had turned away a favorite suitor, Lady Wharton invited her to come and stay with her to be comforted and petted. Unfortunately, Lady Wharton's reputation for complaisance and Lord Wharton's reputation for gallantry was such that no unmarried woman could possibly stay in their house overnight and still be considered respectable. Dolly, however, accepted the invitation gladly, either not knowing or past caring, and had hardly arrived when Lord Wharton, with the air of a conqueror, came to her room. Despite her efforts to maintain affairs on a level of nonsensicality she quickly discovered that he was all too serious—he was famous as an undoer of young women. She screamed for help and called Lady Wharton, who was well used to this kind of thing and took no notice.

A little later Robert Walpole suddenly returned home, and having learned where his sister was, came bellowing and kicking at the Whartons' door, vowing murder at least. Lord Wharton left discreetly by a back entrance. Walpole obtained admission,

told Lady Wharton in words of one syllable exactly what he thought of her and women like her, and carried the distraught Dolly back home. There was a good deal of scandal, and Dolly was packed off to Norfolk again in disgrace. All over London fathers, as a consequence, gave lectures to the young women under their roof, and the gaiety of the younger generation was temporarily put on a much stricter basis, though many of those same fathers and their friends were little better than Lord Wharton.

Mary's father had guessed that there was some mischief afoot under his own roof for a time past, and had never been completely confident in his daughter's discretion since the note intercepted some while back. She was now packed off once more to Acton, where her brother William was living with his silly little wife Rachel. He was still only a lad in his teens, but he was free, a husband, and on the point of becoming a father. In him Mary confided: he was sympathetic, for he himself had been married for reasons of convenience and was not happy. They decided on various plans and Mary wrote to her uncle for help.

The rumble of a coach, and her father was at Acton, angrily bidding her pack up and get herself to West Dean, where she would be well watched and

kept strictly until her approaching marriage to the Irishman he had chosen. Mary wrote in haste to Edward begging him to be under the garden wall near the summer house at ten at night the next Sunday, to carry her off:

"I am fainting with Fear—forgive my Instability—If I do it Love me—if I dare not, do not hate me."

She was in an agony of mind. Her father terrified her more than ever, and she knew that if he came with the Irishman and a parson she would meekly let herself be married, for in her father's presence she was as weak as water. And so she meant to run away. She was every other minute afraid that Edward would hesitate, would delay; and every alternate minute firmly convinced that he would run off with her only too gladly. She wrote again and managed to have this note conveyed to him on Friday evening: as piteous a confession of anxiety, of love, and of virgin fears as any woman in the world ever made.

"I tremble for what we are doing. Are you sure you will love me for ever? Shall we never repent? I fear and I hope. I foresee all that will happen on

this occasion. I shall incense my family in the highest degree. The generality of the world will blame my conduct . . . yet, 'tis possible, you may recompense everything to me. In this letter, which I am fond of, you promise me all that I wish. Since I writ so far, I received your Friday letter. I will be only yours, and I will do what you please. You shall hear from me again to-morrow, not to contradict, but to give some directions. My resolution is taken. Love me and use me well."

The next day she wrote to warn him that her father was suspicious, that he was staying at Acton, and that the elopement must be delayed. She was, as a matter of fact, packed off early next morning in charge of William, who had been severely bidden on no account to let her out of his sight. But Mary had been up before dawn and had contrived to send another hurried note to Edward. He came hot-foot after her, finding more notes at inns on the road where she had rested. As he traveled on horseback and she in a coach he soon overtook her, and actually slept in the same inn one night but without managing to catch a glimpse of her.

The next little note she managed to leave behind for him pointed out that it would be difficult for her to run away with him, even if she could elude Wil-

liam and her disagreeable and vigilant maid and the other servants, so long as he only had a horse: to carry a lady away one needed a coach. So he hired a coach and bumped along the roads behind her; and one morning William looked the other way, her maid was got rid of, and Mary stole out of her inn to one across the road where Edward was waiting. They rode off together and soon after noon came to a little village with a pleasant country parson who married them—not without initial hesitation, but without further protest when Mary reminded him that it would save her from mortal sin. She had not gone through all the humiliations and alarms of the last few days for nothing. Married to Edward she was then and there, in her rumpled traveling dress, and wept in his arms for two hours afterward as they jolted along the roads, while the slightly bewildered Edward comforted her as best he could.

CHAPTER V

MARRIED

The thought of her father often kept Mary awake at nights during the first months of her marriage: and when it was not of him she thought it was of her husband who lay asleep beside her. He was an enigma she could never solve.

She realized acutely how generous to the world's way of thinking he had been to her, for she had come to him absolutely penniless and he had married her for love. And love she really knew very little about. That is the misfortune of women, that they have an appetite but no natural genius for it, and—if they give themselves to a man sufficiently intelligent to take an interest in themselves personally as apart from their merely feminine parts—they find the learning of love's conduct hard, not to be acquired fully until, often, the value of it is past and too much bungling has ruined the sentimental tie between husband and wife. Mary had expected him to be like the husband of the Princesse de Cleves in Madame de Lafayette's delightful novel; but he was

not in the least the romantic or devoted husband, and sometimes she secretly wondered if he resented having been landed as her husband, after so many maneuvers and hesitations.

It is simple enough for a man to be attracted by a woman; but so very hard for him to accept her as a human being. And Mary realized Edward was finding her something of a difficulty. Not that he wasn't fond of her. Though he respected her intelligence, he always had been, always would be jealous, no matter what she did. He always had mistrusted her readiness of speech, and always would. Her mind moved more quickly than his: it annoyed him; and they were always misunderstanding each other.

She who used words so well also mistrusted the use of them and thought she conveyed her submission and love with gestures. But gestures, too, can be misunderstood, and she sometimes felt that when she was demonstrative he only thought how light she was, and when reserved, how unloving. Besides, in true husband fashion he criticized her: her attitude to life, her tastes, and her relations with other people. This made her fretful and sometimes morose.

They stayed, after their marriage, with her girlhood friend Miss Banks, whose father lived near

Thoresby. From there they drove one day to old Mr. Sidney Montagu's. They went in together, knelt to him and begged his blessing. The old man, who had been a scorching gallant in his day, chuckled good-humoredly, blessed them, and added some broad jokes. The few days they stayed at Wortley, and the rest of the time at the Banks', they were seldom alone. In October, Mary being already pregnant, Edward left her to go up to London. One of his cares there was to see Lady Cheyne and Lord Pierrepoint, Mary's aunt and great-uncle, and try whether a reconciliation with the Duke of Kingston could not be achieved. Lady Cheyne sniffed. Lord Pierrepoint promised to help, but did little.

In December Mary moved to Hinchinbroke, Edward's cousin the Earl of Sandwich's seat near Huntingdon. She felt lonely and not very well. She wrote to Edward, tender, wifely little letters. He replied seldom, and then hinted that he suspected her of having company more amusing than she mentioned in her notes.

In the spring she joined Edward in town, and in May their first child, a delicate little boy, was born. She was hardly recovered when her brother William, now twenty and the father of two children, died suddenly of smallpox. Mary was aghast, took it secretly to heart and wept for him often.

The baby worried her. Like most mothers with their first child she fancied there must be all kinds of things she could do to make him stronger, if only she knew what. Now she thought dipping him in cold well-water would help: now something else.

The Montagus went north again in July and Mary began house-hunting. Edward was away from her most of the time; she wrote to him charmingly and begged him not to send her such ungracious replies. She consults him about the brewing of beer, gardens, the price for hiring pewter plates when they set up house. And she has already discovered one of his worst faults. He is a miser. Nothing pleases him more than to live on less than half his income: he will not have too many coals bought at a time.

By now Mary had come out of the tremulous stages of early married life. She was settling down; and the grimmer side of maternity had played its part no doubt, as it so often does, in scattering what romantic ideal she still carried about marriage to Edward.

Vanbrugh, the soldier-poet who was usurping Sir Christopher Wren's place as fashionable architect, was spending his time just then between the half-built Blenheim and the half-built Castle Howard. At the latter now, close by, he was wooing Colonel

Yarborough's daughter and advertising that he had turned over a new leaf and would pursue chance ladies no more. Him Mary saw often in company with the few amusing people she could collect.

Now and then news from town reached her: Lady Cheyne had brought off a match between her sister Frances Pierrepoint and the handsome Earl of Mar; and the Duke of Kingston, now disembarrassed of all his daughters, was definitely just about to offer his hand to Lady Isabella Bentinck, younger even than the youngest of his three daughters, and known besides to be in love with a penniless young man. This made Mary feel less ashamed of her own unfilial behavior, and furious with her father.

Her idols, the Marlboroughs, were abroad in a grand disgrace: at Berlin a combat of wild beasts had been arranged specially for their pleasure and all over the Continent they received honors almost regal. Mary's friend Dolly Walpole, in spite of past scandal, was safely married to Lord Townshend and settled down into a sedate little wife at Raynham—another proof, as every one admitted, of the great cleverness of that clever Robert Walpole, who thus disposed of a sister not entirely unblemished to an eminent statesman peer, and effected thereby an alliance which could not but be politically useful to himself.

After another flying visit to London to treat for the hire of a country house, and during which she saw hardly any one, Mary left her husband in town. He was busying himself on behalf of Steele, who had just been expelled from the House of Commons on account of a pamphlet and was up for trial. On the way back to Yorkshire she visited Lord Pierrepoint, her great-uncle, and put him, as well as her genial old step-grandmother Denbigh, in a mood to attempt reconciliation with her father. She now wrote to Edward chiefly on business, with an alternating flavor of affection and bitterness creeping in here and there. She frequently complains that he does not write to her; does not care much about their infant son.

Queen Anne soon fell seriously ill: she had been worried to death by the intrigues and haughty behavior of her favorites, Harley and Bolingbroke, and had dismissed the former from his post of Lord Treasurer; the Cabinet met to decide what should be done about the succession to the throne, but the Queen was too ill to attend. Next day the members of the Privy Council begged the Queen to appoint the Duke of Shrewsbury Lord Treasurer, which, from her death-bed, she did. The Queen then rallied unexpectedly. The public funds, which had risen three per cent. in expectation of her death, im-

mediately fell again. There were anxious faces everywhere, and not every one was at all sure whether to begin shouting for the Whig or the Tory interest.

Her Tory supporters were hated; and she herself was latterly suspected of a leaning in favor of her brother, the Pretender, whereas the country as a whole was rigidly determined to have a Protestant ruler. When at last the Queen sank into a coma and passed away, few grieved. George I was proclaimed King without any important opposition, and the face of the world changed for the Whigs, and for the Wortley Montagus among them.

The Duke and Duchess of Marlborough soon set foot once more on the shores of England, and were led triumphantly into London preceded by several hundred gentlemen on foot, and hailed by the crowds everywhere. The City Guard who escorted them through the town to their house in St. James' fired off a salute before departing. Six weeks later George I stepped into his new kingdom.

Lord Halifax, who had journeyed to Hanover to convey to the new monarch news of his accession, was given an earldom and the garter: for he had consistently supported the Hanoverian succession and staunchly defended the Whig cause in the House of Lords. Rather remarkable as a compara-

tively incorruptible politician, Charles Montagu, Baron Halifax, then Earl of Halifax, was very much a man of the world and something of an esthete. He was one of Sir Isaac Newton's closest friends, and addicted to mathematics and philosophy, as well as verse-making. He had even collaborated with Matthew Prior when the two of them parodied Dryden with *The Country Mouse and the City Mouse.*

And just as his less brilliant relative, Edward Wortley Montagu, in the House of Commons, agitated for author's copyright laws, so did Halifax demand that prisoners on trial for treason should be allowed a counsel. For these Whigs were an enlightened lot in their day. The story goes that while he was making his speech on this subject he himself broke down, hesitated, and used his temporary embarrassment to push home his point, declaring that, if he under such easy conditions could falter, what might not happen to a man, in terror of his life, speaking in his own defense, unaided.

But Halifax had done more than all this: he had a direct influence on reforming the currency, and establishing firmly alike the Bank of England and the national debt.

Naturally it was to be expected that Edward Wortley Montagu would benefit by his relationship

to this quite exceptional and now powerful man, especially as Lady Mary's father had long been associated with him, more especially so during all the complicated task of bringing about the union with Scotland in 1707. Mary herself for this reason was a little frightened of him, just as she had been frightened in the days of her secret courtship by Lady Jekyll, sister to that other great Whig statesman, Lord Somers, equally a friend of her father, though in this case his ability as a lawyer and not his family connections had raised him up.

Edward had been very busy on his own behalf for some time. Most of Mary's letters to him at this date show her very patent desire that he should distinguish himself. In her shrewd observant way she remarked:

"... as the world is, and will be, 'tis a sort of duty to be rich, that it may be in one's power to do good; riches being another word for power, towards the obtaining of which the first necessary qualification is impudence, and (as Demosthenes said of pronunciation in oratory) the second is impudence, and the third, still, impudence. No modest man ever did or ever will make his fortune. Your friends Lord Halifax, R. Walpole, and all other remarkable instances of quick advancement, have been remarkably

impudent. The Ministry is like a play at Court; there's a little door to get in, and a great crowd without, shoving and thrusting who shall be foremost; people who knock others with their elbows, disregard a little kick of the shins, and still thrust heartily forwards, are sure of a good place."

The news of the Queen's death had come to her in the country: she had seen all the men mount and ride for London, and heard rumors of risings in favor of the Pretender in Scotland. A little alarmed and without news either of her husband or of what was happening, she moved with her child to Castle Howard where the Earl of Carlisle's daughters were alone, their father having hurried to London upon his appointment as one of the Lords Justices for the Government of the Kingdom until George I should come from Hanover. This refuge she said, with a sly dig at Edward's jealousy, was like a nunnery, "for no mortal man ever enters the doors in the absence of their father." From here she heard at length of the impassive and comical appearance of the new ruler on his triumphal progress from Greenwich to St. James' Palace, and that, save for a few silly riots, he had come in quietly.

Edward had had to relinquish his seat in Parliament as member for Huntingdon to his father in

1713 and was undecided where to find himself another. On this Mary advised him earnestly, though he did not pay much attention to her. She certainly understood the art of rope-pulling. Her girlhood friend, Lady Winchester, could have obtained a seat from her father-in-law, the Duke of Bolton, for him; the Earl of Carlisle could help him because his heir, Lord Morpeth, was abroad and wouldn't want to be returned for York which was consequently vacant; Lord Pelham, so closely connected politically and by marriage with the Churchills, Walpoles, Townshends and Sunderlands, she knew was "silly but very good-natured," and if Lord Townshend would only tell Pelham that Edward had been badly treated, he would believe it and let him have Aldburgh. There was no doubt that Lord Townshend would help too, because Dolly Walpole, his new wife, would see to that.

But Edward was not, most definitely not, an impudent man, and if he asked a favor at all, he apparently asked for it late though he grieved bitterly at not getting better positions. He thought he might be Speaker and wished to be Secretary of State: he hesitated and grumbled very much when he was offered a Commissionership to the Treasury, but finally took it. He had expected to wield considerable influence at the King's councils, because

he and Lord Halifax were the only ones on the board who spoke French. As Mary so sharply put it, George I

"could speak no English, and was past the age of learning it. Our customs and laws were all mysteries to him, which he neither tried to understand, nor was capable of understanding if he had endeavored it."

But Edward's French was of no use, because the King, with characteristic indifference, left the government of the country to his Ministers, and talked things over in Latin with Walpole when necessary.

In the end it was Mary who benefited more by Queen Anne's death than Edward. Despite all the many disavowals in her love-letters to her husband, she certainly was not made to love a quiet life in the country: she had a feeling for London, and never more so than now when all the people of her own world were at the height of their power, and she as a married woman would be free at last to taste something of the whirl of London life. She had ached for years to try her success in it: that childish adventure when her father sent for her to the Kit-Cat Club, and a score of eminent men drank her health, had bitten deep into her nature.

"Love and solitude" in Yorkshire was over: she had had much more solitude than love in any event. The period of traipsing about on visits, of living in hired houses, came to an end. Mary left her little son in the country house with his nurses and early in 1715 joined Edward at the new house in Duke Street, St. James', which he had taken. The door into the world opened for her; she was eager and hopeful.

Edward Wortley Montagu was far too busy with his own affairs to concern himself much with those of his wife: for she burst on the world of fashion unchecked by her difficult and jealous husband, and conducted herself discreetly, successfully and happily.

That sharp eye of hers noted all the ebb and flow of personalities around the places of power: her sharp pen noted them down. She went to Court and took the fat old King's fancy enormously; she saw every one, and while they amused her she found that she amused them.

The King she found ridiculous: as indeed he was, the worthy, simply dressed little man, with his elderly and dull friends. Mary dismissed them all; of her monarch she wrote:

"In private life he would have been called an

honest blockhead; and Fortune, that made him a King, added nothing to his happiness, only prejudiced his honesty, and shortened his days . . . he was more dull than lazy, and would have been so well contented to have remained in his little town of Hanover, that if the ambition of those about him had not been greater than his own, we should never have seen him in England; and the natural honesty of his temper, joined with the narrow notions of a low education, made him look upon his acceptance of the Crown as an act of usurpation, which was always uneasy to him."

His immediate circle included what Mary calls "playfellows, male and female," of whom Baron Goritz was the most important, while Bernstoff, the secretary, was "avaricious, artful, and designing: and had got his share in the King's councils by bribing his women."

Of these ladies the first to arrive, with the King, was Madame Kilmansegg, now past forty, extremely fat, animated, cultivated and needy. Goritz and Bernstoff were alarmed at the amount of money Madame Kilmansegg accumulated, and hastily sent for Mademoiselle Schulemberg, aged about sixty and thin as a lath, to whose apartments the King had long been accustomed to repair in the evenings

to watch her cut likenesses and pictures out of paper.

The German Ministers besides sending for Mademoiselle Schulemberg, who in Mary's opinion was even duller than the King himself, also recommended Lord Townshend warmly to the monarch's attention: he and Colonel Stanhope were made the two Secretaries of State, and of course "Robin" Walpole, Townshend's brother-in-law, was appointed Paymaster. It was Walpole who in the end showed the most genius for statesmanship. He was sniffed at by Lord Wharton, that disgraceful person who was nevertheless a sincere politician, by Lord Halifax, by the Marlboroughs. But he knew what he was doing.

This fat country squire somehow knew, though he may not consciously have admitted, that the era of Court politicians was passing, and that tactics rather than personal influence would be needed in a land ruled by a stranger chosen arbitrarily by Parliament, and therefore, in fact, ruled by Parliament. No one was more skilful at politics than Robin: he used his burly bruskness even with real effect and his patience was as illimitable as he himself was far-sighted. And there was never any one more English, no one knew better just how far he could try the temper of the people and exactly when to compromise with distinction.

His days of greatness were not yet come, however. The great Lords seemed to have the power: Walpole was simply there.

The Duke of Kingston was much taken up with his new wife, who was giddy and silly and a proper old man's darling. He had rather grumpily accepted his daughter Mary's wicked disobedience and her runaway marriage; he had even permitted her to pay her respects to him, though he never wholly forgave her, and let her know it.

When she came to Arlington Street again, she was trembling. He was in the parlor, standing, as he so often did, in the window, and when she threw herself at his feet gave her, very coldly and mechanically, his paternal blessing, but without looking at her. While he asked her one or two questions, about her infant son, about her husband's prospects, he kept his handsome head slightly turned aside. He did not suggest that she should stay: it was purely a formal visit, she realized, and went away soon, after kissing her pretty young stepmother with an affability that bordered on insolence. The immediate result of the interview was that she felt a sudden rush of tenderness for her husband. Edward was taking himself very seriously, and rather fussing himself about his prospects; but he was an excellent husband, as husbands went, and he belonged to her.

For a few weeks she even blamed herself for the imperiousness of her heart which made her so often proffer him advances, subtly and artistically as a clever woman does, of real affection. They always seemed to be repelled; obviously it was because she did not know how to manage him. She tried different methods: noticing that she could often interest him and make him even a little animated when she chatted to him of letters, of men, and of intrigues; she learned to adapt her conversation, give it touches of satire and hit off character as she related trifling events she had observed. And she made the conversation complementary to his, so that often he felt that he had said the amusing things that she told him. When he smiled and looked pleased and alert she would hope that everything was going to be all right.

The satisfaction of dazzling and attracting Edward intoxicated her. But afterward, if she approached him, he had still that lordly cold way of putting her aside, politely removing her hand from his arm, snubbing the caress she was too proud to offer, but hoped would be met half-way. He was methodical even in his most intimate relations with her, distant, suspicious, a little querulous. The rushes of affection which circumstances, and a degree of loneliness, impelled her to encourage her-

self to feel for him from time to time were almost always damped by some subtle inhumanity or subtler coolness of his.

So she turned from him to gaze with interest upon the great world again and again. And here her bright eye brought her another kind of unhappiness. She noticed too much and too clearly to find any of the folks she met truly magnificent, and indeed the Duchess of Marlborough, her own father, and her friend, Lady Stafford, were the only human beings she ever thoroughly admired. It is very hard to have common sense and be clear-sighted and also to be impressed by one's fellow creatures.

It was only a short time after she came to town that she paid her first visit to the new Court, when with Edward she attended one of George I's earliest Drawing-Rooms. All the formality and rigid etiquette of the late Queen's entourage had given way to a much more agreeable, though not comparatively stately, atmosphere. People even spoke to the King without having been addressed by him, which made the more conventional courtiers faint with horror. The Prince and Princess of Wales remained a little apart with their trains, on these occasions, generally at the card table in the smallest of the three reception rooms still hung with portraits of Charles II's mistresses. The king did not especially love Prin-

cess Caroline, though for her character and intelligence he should have, by the general rule. For George I liked clever women because they amused him, just as philosophers and scientists did.

Mary soon attracted him; he singled her out for especial attention, which was particularly delightful as so many of her intimate friends observed it. Not all of them knew, however, that what pleased him so much was the wit with which she gave him short summaries of their past, their foibles, their characters, which she had the knack of doing admirably, if cruelly.

More than once, and alone of all the English ladies who attended Court, she found herself invited to the King's more intimate gatherings, late in the evening. Conversations in French about natural philosophy interspersed with jokes and allusions which even Mary, who was anything but nicely mouthed, sometimes thought excessively coarse were the entertainment. It was all very dull and absurd, especially as all sorts of strange hangers-on were freely coming and going. The two Turkish soldiers whom George I, a gallant general in his day, had taken prisoner in a battle and kept as personal attendants were perhaps the most remarkable of these. From valets to the Elector of Saxony they had risen with his rise and were now back-stairs pages to the

King of England, and the only individuals permitted to attend his dressings and undressings. Rumor said that they had a great influence over the King, indeed almost as much as Mademoiselle Schulemberg.

All this diverted Mary exceedingly, and she repeated her private observations and retailed the conversations she heard to every one, laughing. Edward, however, did not see the humor of it and warned her to be more discreet; he only saw in the little comic King a Protestant monarch whom a Whig county gentleman with some ambition must loyally serve. Her friends, the Marlboroughs and the Walpoles, who did not understand French, listened avidly to such tit-bits as Mary could translate, or such private information as she cared to convey.

The third or fourth time Mary went to the general Court she went alone and in considerable perturbation. For the Duchess of Shrewsbury had sent her word of a wonderful lottery and begged her to come and see her that very evening when she would not be in attendance on the Princess, but at her own home. If there was anything that Mary loved it was the chance of winning money as prizes in lotteries. Her allowance was small and she had to account very scrupulously to Edward for the spend-

ing of it. He considered lotteries, juggling with stocks, and even excessive card-playing as dishonorable and disgusting. But even so it was more than she could do to resist going in secretly for any and every lottery that presented itself, and the one the Duchess Adelhida mentioned seemed particularly attractive. Also Lady Rochester, the beautiful daughter of Sir William Leveson-Gower, Lady Betty Germain, her particular friend the Duchess of Montagu and Mr. Nevill, who sang so charmingly, were all expected.

Mary determined at all costs to go. It would obviously be difficult, for there was no knowing when the Court would end. The King might retire early, he might not; but he probably would remain for a considerable time, for, as Mary reminded herself slyly, there was nothing of very great interest for him to retire to. She put on a dress of stone-colored China silk with bold crimson stripes, a fine French lace, (that her sister, Lady Mar, had got an acquaintance to smuggle in for her), caught up with pearls at the low bosom, pearl drops of some value in her ears and threaded in her hair, which she always wore in a simple disorder and in all her life never powdered or, save when she was traveling, hid by additions of false hair. Her petticoat was of a kind of new very supple brocart, watered and sewn

with seed pearls in a design of love-knots: she took particular care to cleanse her hands scrupulously and found Clifford's perfumed wash-balls, bought only the other day in Cheapside, performed this task well. The lipsalve too, bought in the same shop, did indeed bring up her lips in a "fine lively red" as advertised. Crimson Russia leather shoes and a great fur-lined cape over all completed the toilet. She came down the stairs of their Duke Street house, and met her husband going out to Button's Club, where the litterateurs met constantly. He had clearly drunk quite a little already and was consequently colder and more severe than ever.

"You prefer the round of pleasure," he said very solemnly, "I can not help but observe, to the pleasures and peace of a contemplative life in the country."

As he did not seem to expect a reply, Mary made none, but only smiled. It was obvious that she had to go to the Court since she was bidden, and as to the festivities afterward, that was, up to the moment, a secret which she would keep. Her anger even had almost evaporated by the time her chair had been carried the short distance to St. James', and entirely as she made her way up the great stairs to the Drawing-Room.

The King was most obliging and raised her al-

most affectionately as she sank to the ground before him, the funny little man in his plain plum-colored suit of clothes. The three salons were pretty dark, and there was nothing very cheerful about them at all except the face of Lord Townshend as he looked self-possessed and omniscient while listening with a slightly overacted attention to Bernstoff, who stood next to him in the formal circle behind the King. But Mary found infinite enjoyment in watching and listening; there would be so many clever little things she would be able to describe afterward, and so many that even in themselves delighted her—a piece of flattery ill-done, a snub delivered, an indiscreet remark overheard, or merely the infinite dullness of the monarch himself, which was a permanent source of amusement to her and a permanent joke to tell about.

Marlborough, looking very ill but magnificent in peach-colored satin with a silver waistcoat buttoned with brilliants, brought over and presented to her an Italian priest, the Abbé Conti of whom she had heard her husband speak. The Italian philosopher, as every one called him, was already a celebrated member of George I's Court and a great favorite of the King. George I fancied himself very much as an independent thinker, and had found Conti useful in explaining to him in French all about Sir Isaac

Newton, the only Englishman that George really revered, and of whom he had heard at length, and bitterly, from his beloved Hanoverian subject, Liebnitz.

Conti, who was very much the man of the world, found Lady Mary delightful: he in turn presented to her a young Frenchman called Rémond, and they were joined by Lady Bristol, mother of the young Herveys, and followed swiftly by the King, who, hearing a phrase of Mary's on the subject of platonic affection, came bustling forward.

"I would pretend," she said, "that to admire what we do not expect to possess is the only true philosophical way."

"But if it lead to unhappiness?" asked Rémond, hand on heart.

"The misery will be less than we understand is experienced by many jealous possessors."

"Friendship," said the King, in his execrably pronounced French, "and above all platonic friendship, is, as I understand it, the enjoyment of all the intellectual sweets of a pretty passion with none of its smarts."

Mary felt inclined to laugh. But she looked to Conti for a reply:

"The institution of platonic friendship," he said gravely, "is usually a convenience for exasperating

feelings artificially and delaying possession. But that is not a philosophical but a mundane invention, which we owe to female writers of romances."

After half an hour of this and no sign of the evening being a short one, she contrived to engage in conversation with Mademoiselle Schulemberg, who, they said, was to be created Duchess of Kendall for her "services to the Crown." To her she explained that she had to pay, and dearly wanted to pay, a visit of the utmost urgency that evening and implored her, whom she knew could contrive anything she chose, to make it possible for her with the King to take a departure earlier than etiquette or her own inclinations allowed. Mademoiselle Schulemberg agreed, and soon Mary saw the King shake a finger at her and smile. Mademoiselle Schulemberg came near to tell her that she had His Majesty's permission to retire. With the deepest curtsey in the world, and a word to one or two of the gentlemen near the door, she slipped out.

As she went down the stairs and just stooped to gather her skirt, who should be coming in but young Mr. Craggs, one of the King's especial favorites. Him Mary had heard of and met twice before. His father had commenced footman to the gay Duchess of Norfolk and pleased her so well by the discreet

manner in which he carried her love-letters and arranged her assignations of gallantry with James II that he became her steward, had served the Duke of Marlborough—as Mary heard said had been his pimp—and from there before long stepped up to Postmaster-General. His son, James Craggs Junior, was very dear to the King and was permitted extraordinary liberties with him. He had, so rumor said, recommended himself by his personal beauty and gaiety to the present King's favorite mistress in Hanover and come to be on the best possible terms with her, and so to the good graces of his royal rival.

Craggs approached Lady Mary, smiling, put his hand across the banisters to stop her, and said she should on no account run off. Although she told him that she had the King's permission to leave on a most urgent errand, he only laughed at her, and to her absolute amazement all of a sudden snatched her up in his arms, ran with her up the stairs, set her down in the ante-chamber, kissed both her hands while she stood speechless and trembling with terror and rage, and abruptly departed. The pages, looking a little alarmed, obviously thought best to do as they always did when on those evenings any one entered the ante-room, flung open the doors and announced her. Mary, still in a daze, was forced to walk forward, and, feeling quite ridiculous and

very angry, dropped once more her curtsey and was raised once more by the surprised King, who had turned as she reentered with a genial "Ah, revoilà!"

It was all she could do not to fling herself into his arms, she felt so extremely upset and in need of sympathy; and as it was she blurted out:

"Oh, Lord, Sir, I have been so frighted!" and ran on into an account of her very unexpected and rather disconcerting adventure. The whole Court was amazed; and in the middle of their outcries, wide eyes and questions, the doors opened again and Mr. Craggs was announced. He came in calmly, smiling, with an air of great innocence.

"Mais, comment donc, Monsieur Craggs," asked King George severely, *"est-ce qui c'est l'usage de ce pays de porter des belles dames comme un sac de froment?"*

Craggs was in no way taken aback: "There is nothing I would not do for your Majesty's satisfaction," he replied, bowing very low. This amused and soothed the King, who soon moved away again, leaving Mary, very much bewildered and half in tears, to make her way out again in embarrassment which was not decreased by overhearing the disobliging remark of Craggs aside to Lady Bristol at her babbling out the truth.

She got into her chair and sank down while the

men heaved her up and began stolidly to make their way to Duke Street again, the flare of a single torch before them. Suddenly waking from her inattentive surly mood she cried to them furiously not to take that way but to go to the Duchess of Shrewsbury's. Despite her vexation she still wanted to go there; and in any case, to prevent the tale of her misadventure getting about, clearly the best thing she could do was to tell it herself, for it is always hard to be malicious about people who tell tales against themselves cleverly.

Two torches stuck in the brackets either side the house, every window showing lights, pleased her eye with an anticipation of the society now indoors at Adelhida's. She was happy and eager, had forgotten her dismay almost entirely as she entered the large room and found not a formal gathering, but knots of people chatting here, others at card-tables, all appearing animated and rather attractive in their multi-colored clothes under the light of the many candles that the big pale room held.

Dolly Walpole (as Mary still thought of her old friend) was in the window with Carr, Lord Hervey, who was said to be on such good terms with Dolly's sister-in-law, Robert Walpole's wife. Addison, whom Mary particularly liked and esteemed, just over from Dublin, talked and looked shy with the

strenuous Earl of Manchester's wife Dodington and Lady Betty Germain who was laughing shrilly. Young Philip Stanhope and Lord Sunderland played at ombre with her own sister Lady Mar and another woman not of her acquaintance; and near by, very elegant in his red coat but poor as a church mouse, was Colonel Fielding, her mother's relative. She inquired after his little son Henry, now ten years old and at Eton, to whom in his babyhood she had taken a fancy.

After all the exchange of curtsies, bows, and kissings was over and while still the new arrival who could easily gain attention, Mary burst into her tale of Craggs and the King. Adelhida bent over her chair to smooth a little unruliness in the lace at her neck, young Philip Stanhope darted her one of his consciously amorous glances, Dolly and Lord Hervey came over, and a little group centered round the chair in which she was seated. That was the advantage of the Duchess' evenings: she had long dispensed with the usual, formal circle at which the hostess sat in state with the most important guest on her left and the next most important one at the opposite horn of the half-moon of chairs that ringed the hearth.

Here the groups formed and broke as every one pleased. And a little after Mary's tale was done,

musicians came in and, placing themselves in the alcove where the Raphael hung, executed two Italian pieces and a new German trio for flute and strings. The card-players did not stop for them, and most of the others talked incessantly. Mary thought there was nothing more agreeable than such an evening, which ended with supper in another room off the prettiest French china as well as plate.

When she got home, it was already past midnight and alarming enough with so many footpads about, though Colonel Fielding and Addison attended her through the streets. Edward was already asleep, and little wonder, for he had consumed a good deal of mulled claret as well as port. Mary was too happy and exalted to go to bed, and after taking off her dress herself—she was too kind-hearted to wake Grace—sat at the little desk in her closet a long while writing at a poem. The idea for it had come to her on hearing Sunderland speak disobligingly of a woman now married for the second time, whose favors he was supposed to have enjoyed during her widowhood.

She slept lightly and rose gay and refreshed, read her poem as she sipped her chocolate and nibbled some toasted bread. It pleased her enormously. When Edward began in his usual peremptory but not unfriendly way to ask her what she had seen and

done the night before, she was not in the least put out, but told him as much as suited her, touching lightly on the party at the Duchess of Shrewsbury's and diverting his attention from considering that too much by showing him her poem, which he condescended to praise, even suggesting quite an apt alteration to one line.

But he said she must beware of consorting too frequently with her sister Frances. There were strange tales about her good husband, the handsome Earl of Mar, and in politics one had to be careful, and so on. Mary only laughed. She was rather fond of Frances and knew Frances was not fond of her husband, so what did he matter to her?

However, when that picturesque and eccentric personage came to town from Scotland at midsummer, and did actually, Jacobite though he was, present himself to kiss His Majesty's hand with due loyalty, Edward told Mary he was glad of it. Mary, who generally knew more of what was going on than her husband, told him he might live to be less glad. It was a shot in the dark, but as a matter of fact Lord Mar had come to town to kiss the King's hand for reasons of his own, and, in fact, to survey the general territory. He left almost immediately afterward, following on some interesting and highly secret conversations with half a dozen eminent per-

sons, for Scotland again, where he invited a very large number of the members of the nobility to attend a great hunting party as his guests.

Serious mischief was afoot. Very little hunting took place, but much conversation, which resulted in each of the noble lords present summoning all his wild Highland tribesmen to his aid. The Earl of Mar thereupon raised the standard of rebellion for the Old Pretender, that dreary individual who for so long had been warming himself at the Court of Louis XIV. No one could have been unluckier than the Old Pretender: the French King died at the very moment he was most needed by those who disliked the Hanoverians. And Lord Mar proved himself an almost superlatively ineffective rebel-leader.

The Stuart cause was unpopular even with many who disliked the idea of German George and his freakish friends: for the Stuart cause was regarded as the cause of the detested French, our enemies, and quantities of people who wished James III could be King, thoroughly realized the inconvenience of having him over, if he came over well supported by the Catholic monarch against whom England, Holland, and all the Germanies had so long been launching themselves. And in the end Lord Mar's little rebellion died away almost before it commenced. True, James III came over to Scotland early in

1716, but he trotted back almost at once. England remained fairly calm and a rising in the west was fairly easily put down.

Mary meanwhile was extremely ill. She caught the smallpox. Though she did not have it seriously, she was temporarily in despair. Her condition was not improved by incessant visits from Lady Mar, who wondered if she ought to fly the country, and the Duchess of Kingston, who said the Duke was gravely angry about this new family disgrace. Lady Mar protested that her husband's treason was not her fault at all, that her father himself had chosen such a husband for her, and that it was only by good luck that her brother-in-law, also of his choice, her sister Evelyn's husband, Lord Gower, was not also now fighting for the rebels. For he, many people said, had already mounted his horse and was for riding to join the Earl of Mar, when a messenger came in haste to advise him that the Jacobites were in a sad way and had suffered a serious defeat. Lord Gower, instead of turning his mount north, turned it south and joined the Duke of Argyll for the Hanoverians.

"The only interesting thing he ever did that I know," Mary said weakly from her bed. She was worrying herself terribly because she feared her face would be badly marked afterward. Indeed,

she did feel very ill too, and reminded herself how swiftly her poor brother William had been carried off by the same disease. However, she recovered slowly, thanks to Doctor Garth, who came in daily to see her, and was soon about again. Her face cleared perfectly: only her eyelashes fell out and refused to grow again, which gave her large handsome eyes a most peculiar, though far from unattractive appearance.

She went to rest and take some country air at St. Albans with the Marlboroughs and found the Duke far from well, wholly wrapped up in his family life, in country pursuits and in the building of Blenheim. He had no thought of reentering public life, in spite of the clear determination of purposeful Sarah, his wife, who was never to be finished with Courts and intrigues while she lived.

The Montagus went to Wortley next and Mary busied herself with writing a quantity of poetry, copies of which she despatched to her friends. It was of the occasional variety, intended to amuse only, but neat enough, especially to such as caught her more hidden allusions. Those penetrating eyes of hers had smiled on many an absurdity during that year she had spent in London in the very thick of fashion, and she had plenty of material for making witty lines. The first one of all she had begun

at St. Albans on the subject of her recent terrors at losing her looks: it was inspired as a matter of fact by a new poem of that amusing Mr. Gay, whose verses were now so much liked and whose light touch was so very feminine that she found him an excellent model. Besides, Mary had an easy colloquial faculty that could really bear comparison with Mr. Gay's, at least while they were both alive. It was later, when she took to a more braced and biting satirical vein, that she wrote best. Her wit was none the worse for being broad, in the current fashion, and she could press a point home with perfect unscrupulousness. Yet already the more wistful mood that settled on her long years after sometimes touched her:

> "Has love no pleasures free from guilt and fear?
> Pleasures less fierce, more lasting, more sincere?
> Thus let us gently kiss and fondly gaze;
> Love is a child, and like a child he plays."

Composing these verses occupied Mary agreeably most of the time she was with her husband in the north; she read them to old Mr. Montagu, who gave her a pair of fine earrings as a reward, and twitted his son on the worldly knowledge his wife had acquired so readily—much to Edward's vexation.

They were hardly back in town when Edward

was told that he might be, and then definitely that he would be, appointed ambassador to Constantinople. Whether he suspected it or not Mary felt fairly certain that he owed the appointment, which was considered a lucrative one, to her own charms, since Lord Townshend and Walpole and the King all liked her. They may have respected Edward, he was so palpably an honorable man, but no one could like him greatly, he was so formidably reserved and coldly amiable with every one. In his heart of hearts Edward fancied he ought really to have been a Roman Senator, and had been born much too late into a frivolous world incapable of esteeming him at his true worth.

It cost Mary a little pang to think she must leave London, so recently conquered. Things were going well with her. The poems she had written were being handed about generally, compliments on them reached her daily, and so did gallant missives from several gentlemen on whom she smiled in public but refused discreetly to see alone. She was in constant demand at every kind of entertainment, from riding with the King at Richmond, playing cards with the Princess at Court, to giving an opinion at the play. Every one said how charming and witty she was, except the older ladies, some of whom eyed her a little askance. She felt within herself the magic

gift of pleasing, though not yet quite so much as she wished, not in a sufficiently glittering way.

So far she had only been surveying the ground: had been a mere onlooker, since more experience or glory was needed before she could freely throw herself confidently into the stream of fashionable life. She saw that to succeed it needed a stout heart and great aplomb. And she suddenly conceived a new admiration for her sister Frances, who had taken her husband the Earl of Mar's sedition so calmly and his defeat still more calmly. By remaining in London and continuing to visit at Court she had made it obvious that she was more truly daughter to the Whig Duke of Kingston than helpmeet of a Jacobite spouse. He had fled to France: his wife remained cheerfully in England.

Mary, who tried to be so philosophical and was really so very emotional, soon needed to show an amount of phlegm herself. All unexpectedly that miserable wretch, the printer Curll, who lived chiefly by publishing stolen manuscripts and libelous rubbish, came out with a volume of *Court Poems*, which contained three of the verses Mary had recently composed. The author's name was not given, as it was stated on the title page that they were "published faithfully as they were found in a pocket-book taken up in Westminster Hall, the last

day of the Lord Winton's trial." A further explanation added that they might be by "a lady of quality," or that on the other hand they might be by Mr. Gay or by "the judicious translator of Homer." The publisher being a good business man knew that a general debate and inquiry on the true author would advertise the book.

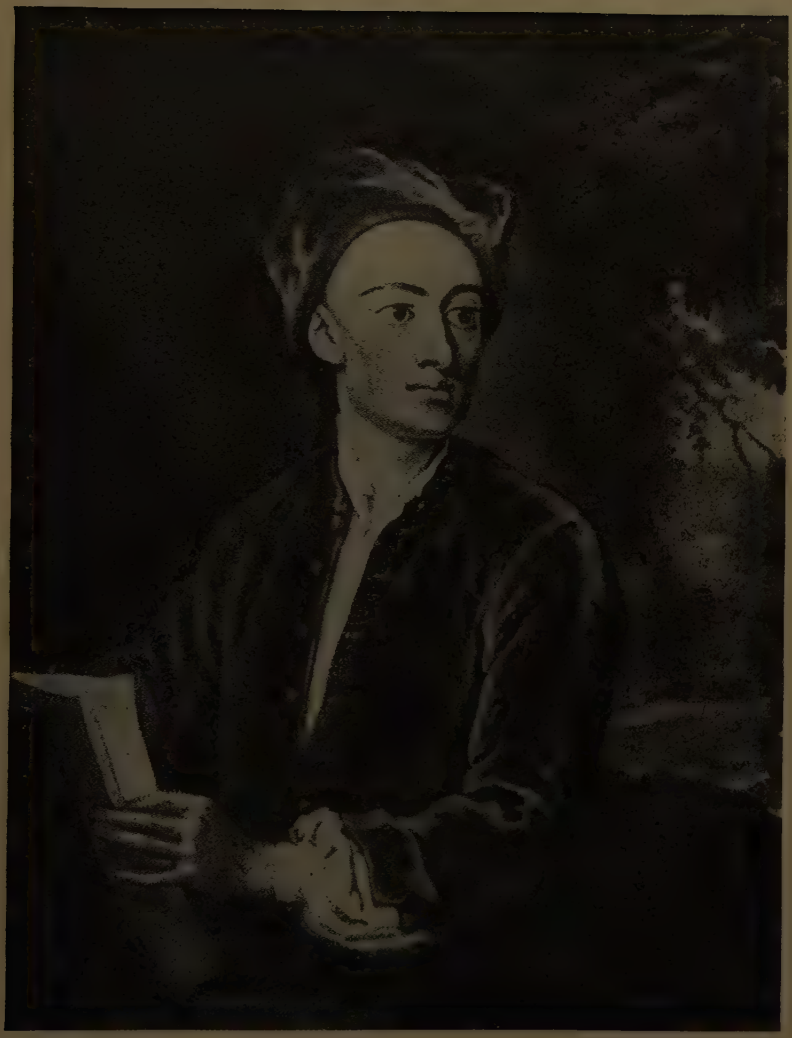
But that was not all. Only a few weeks later it was pretty generally said everywhere that the poems were Lady Mary's, even by those who did not know her; and, a little later, that Curll, the publisher, had been whipped within an inch of his life by Mr. Pope. Some said it was because Curll had pretended the poems were from his pen, others because he had dared to print privately circulated verses belonging to a great lady; again others said that Curll had been poisoned, not whipped; a few ventured that he was dead. But as the King was just leaving for Hanover, and London rapidly emptying, the gossip about *Court Poems* soon died away: not, however, before Lady Mary had sent a note to Mr. Pope requesting him to call upon her.

Here one fine morning he presented himself, a curious little figure. Mr. Pope was an absurd-looking person about four feet high, misshapen, sickly. When he was shown up to Mary's room she thought for a moment he looked more like one of the tum-

bling dwarfs she had seen at the Fair than the distinguished author of *The Rape of the Lock,* of *The Essay on Criticism,* and the translator of the *Iliad.* However, he climbed into a chair, and once she had perceived that curious illumination that burns in the faces, however plain, of men of genius, and let his nice conversation interest her, the absurdity and pathos of the human form vanished in a lively curiosity about the being that inhabited it.

Pope, of course, was secretly thrilled at visiting Mary. Not only did she look vastly attractive in a fine muslin *négligée* and a cap, holding a little cat on her lap as she turned from her dressing-table to gaze (and to gaze down) on her visitor: but she was a very great lady indeed, and the kind of great lady that a poet most needed as a patron.

She complimented him on his verse; he complimented her on hers. She complimented him on his gallantry to an unknown lady. He affected not to understand. She told him she had heard lately that a distinguished poet had thrashed a certain scurrilous printer. Pope laughed shrilly and corrected her: the poet, who was not a very distinguished one (for, he said, he knew him well), had not thrashed the printer. He had merely given him some wine to drink and put a nasty drug in it that had made him very, very sick. That was to teach him not to



Alexander Pope at the age of twenty-eight

After a portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller in Mr. Pope, His Life and His Times, by George Paston, Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., London

take liberties in future. Hereupon Mary and little Mr. Pope both laughed very much, and Mary said that she was delighted to hear that the poet, whom she personally did consider very distinguished, had invented and applied so ingenious a punishment. Was there no means of letting the poet know how utterly she delighted in the news? Mr. Pope said gravely that the poet should hear of it, and they both smiled.

Mary was a little nonplussed by her visitor still: and curiously flattered, as she had seldom been, to think he admired her. For he looked immensely as if he did. She was glad when the door opened and her maid came in with some of Mr. Wortley Montagu's favorite Tokay and dishes of sweetmeats and pastries. She bade the maid tell Mr. Montagu she would be obliged if he would wait upon her immediately. Before Mr. Pope had broken his first pastry or nibbled it, Edward arrived, bringing with him Doctor Garth and the Abbé Conti. Little Mr. Pope climbed down from his chair and made a leg to them: the gentlemen were enchanted to find him there, compliments filled the air.

The talk turned now on the immediate prospect of the Montagus' departure for the East.

"Shall you travel by sea?" the Abbé asked, closing his snuff-box.

"No. I intend the land route," Edward told him. "An expanse of water is so tedious a sight. I confess I can not willingly bear to be long upon that undiversified element."

"You are right," said Doctor Garth. "The sea is as dull to look on as the land would be, had not the hand of nature and the work of man covered it with diverse shapes, fruits, and flowers. A bare stretch of soil is unpleasing to the eye, and the sea has the same monotony."

"The earth is for men and the sea for fishes," remarked Mr. Pope, with a shrill titter. "Each to his taste; though I vow of all things salt water is the most disagreeable."

"I recollect," said Doctor Garth, wiping his mouth after a draft of wine, "that Mr. Aaron Hill, who was in Constantinople with Lord Paget, describes the roads of that part as dangerous and infested with robbers."

"A fustian book," Mr. Pope interjected. "He wrote it, I am informed, in a fit of flatulence, which he mistook for the working of inspiration, much like his later management of the theater here. But, if he misses of being a writer, he may suffice for a link-boy to spy out the way before you."

"Lady Mary has ever longed to travel," Edward replied. "I fancy no danger will flutter her spirits."

Mary, who was busy fixing a patch on her left temple, said nothing, but extended her foot so that the maid might slip her shoe on.

"There is one thing I envy you very dearly," the Abbé said to her, bending back to get a look at her. "You will have the occasion of seeing the plains of Troy, of treading upon ground twice sacred. For I confess," turning again to bow to Mr. Pope, "that Homer's descriptions have never been so vivid as when I read them in Mr. Pope's versions; and I am at a loss to know how there could be two poets to describe the same scenes and events so equally, so harmoniously agreeing, yet each so original. I have sometimes taken up my copy of the Greek, that Fleury himself gave me in a splendid cover, and wondered to find it so noble a translation of Mr. Pope's epic."

"Monsieur l'Abbé is too good," said Mr. Pope, with a brilliant smile. "I should be well satisfied to think myself faithful to the spirit of Homer. There is very little envy in my composition; and who could wish to be thought as great as Homer?"

"Who indeed?" said Edward so abruptly as to cause Mary to drench herself in the flask of essence with which she was sprinkling her shift. This sudden snub brought a slight constraint upon the company and a suspicion of stiffness into Mr. Pope's

attitude. The Abbé offered him some snuff, which he accepted, and sneezed defiantly. Mary took it upon herself to ease the atmosphere.

"No one could wish to be as great as Homer," she said, getting up out of her low chair and coming to stand behind Edward, "in comparison with his times. It was Homer's claim to preeminence that he was great alone; great without ancestors and great among barbarians." And she smiled bewitchingly at Pope, adding: "But unless you would stay and see me shift, begone all of you to the parlor while I dress myself modestly. Mr. Pope, you shall hear from us on our travels. Monsieur l'Abbé and Doctor Garth shall be in our minds as guardians of our souls and our bodies both. You have obliged us infinitely by your visit: gentlemen, your servant."

And she curtsied, and they bowed, and Garth stepped on Mary's cat which squalled, and the maid ran to open the door for them as they turned to go, all repeating "Your servant, madam," and bowing in competition with one another, except Edward, who was looking very proud because he had stood up for the classics. And the last Mary saw of them was as they went down-stairs to examine Edward's collection of antique medals, Mr. Pope humbly refusing to precede any one through the door, and then going out first, of course.

Two days later she had a letter from him, a most elegant and respectfully tender letter. She smiled at it: but she was not vexed to have made an impression or to have secured a champion.

She was deeply involved in all sorts of domestic preparations for their journey. Edward rushed off north again; it was she who interviewed prospective chaplains and surgeons, she who engaged a secretary for her husband, collected information about the best routes, where most economically to hire carriages abroad, superintended the making of traveling clothes for herself and her child, sought instructions from the Duchess of Marlborough as to what especial etiquette was to be observed in the Courts they would visit on the way, and tried by questioning Townshend to acquaint herself with the situation in Constantinople and the purport of her husband's embassy.

She smiled to herself now and then when she recalled that it was Mademoiselle de Scudéry's romance about *Ibrahim ou L'Illustre Pacha* which she had been reading that day in the park when Edward first really declared himself. How romantic she had been about him then! Was she not being romantic about Constantinople now?

She ordered her chair and had herself carried to the city to make some purchases of materials there,

and was tempted to buy herself a wig, which she fancied would be more comfortable than any other kind of head-dress, and warm, for the journey. She chose a black one which set off her complexion and her eyes.

A last frantic round of visits was followed by a formal interview with her father, whose blessing she sought before starting. The Duke was a shade more cordial now to this daughter who, though disobedient, was at least an ambassador's wife, and he presented her with a miniature portrait of himself set in diamonds.

With Edward by her side, the baby in her own lap, attended by their already numerous suite in a private phaeton, she took the road for Gravesend on the first of August. As they crossed the river and came into the country she cast a backward glance. The bulk of new St. Paul's was still visible and she fancied, as at last it vanished, that she would be glad to see it again some day.

CHAPTER VI

AMBASSADRESS

THE bright eyes of Lady Mary, which her new friend Pope had flattered so profusely in his well-turned letter, derived evident enjoyment from the new spectacles that presented themselves immediately, after a great tossing in the North Sea, she set foot at Flushing. Holland delighted her with its cleanliness, its cheapness and its prosperity. While the difficulties of travel were great, the hired horses, that bore the Wortley Montagus from stage to stage through Germany, tired more easily than the indefatigable lady they drew. Now she sat shivering all night in a wind-swept wayside hovel, too cold to sleep or to undress, though she did at least have the satisfaction of her own bed, which she carried with her.

Now arrived in Cologne, after three hours' sleep she was out and about admiring the jewels on the images of saints in the churches, and—like a good Protestant—eying rather dubiously and with amusement the skulls of the eleven thousand virgins.

Then on through the numerous principalities of Germany, she observed the follies of mankind everywhere, especially, in one Lutheran church in Nuremberg, noting that the image of the Savior over the altar had been decked out "in a fair full-bottomed wig very well powdered." At Ratisbon she caught a cold and went out to some assemblies, only to find the inhabitants the most quarrelsome people in the world. From here the Wortley Montagus and their suite were rowed down the Danube to Vienna, arriving on September 3, 1716.

It was some little time before Mary paid her first visit to the Imperial Court, as she had to wait for her Court dress, in which she was "squeezed up . . . and adorned with a gorget and the other implements thereunto belonging: a dress very inconvenient, but which certainly shows the neck and shape to great advantage." And when she did get to Court, she found it not at all like England, for no man but the Emperor was admitted to the Empress's drawing-room, and everything was very ceremonial and grave, though the Empress herself charmed Mary beyond words.

As the wife of England's Ambassador, Mary, of course, ranked as a very great personage indeed, and received invitations to dine with "several of the first people of quality," including Count Schönbrunn,

the Vice-Chancellor, at his beautiful residence. Everywhere she was delighted alike with the fine food and wines, and the *objets d'art* which adorned the houses she visited, though the narrow streets, dark houses and crowding together of several families into one building rather displeased her. But she was greatly diverted by all the entertainments, especially by an opera given in the open air and magnificently staged, which came to an end suddenly when the rain came on; by a very indecent comedy at the theater, and another more original diversion in the gardens of the Empress Amelia, the late Emperor Joseph's widow. Here, in her own words:

"the Empress herself was seated on a little throne at the end of a fine alley in the garden, and on each side of her were ranged two parties of her ladies of honour with other young ladies of quality, headed by the two young Archduchesses, all dressed in their . . . hair full of jewels, with fine light guns in their hands; and at proper distances were placed three oval pictures, which were the marks to be shot at. The first was that of a CUPID, filling a bumper of Burgundy, and the motto, *'Tis easy to be valiant here.* The second a FORTUNE, holding a garland in her hand, the motto, *For her whom Fortune favours.*

The third was a SWORD, with a laurel wreath on the point, the motto, *Here is no shame to the vanquished.* Near the Empress was a gilded trophy wreathed with flowers, and made of little crooks, on which were hung rich Turkish handkerchiefs, tippets, ribbons, laces, etc., for the small prizes. The Empress gave the first with her own hand, which was a fine ruby ring set round with diamonds, in a gold snuff-box. There was, for the second, a little Cupid set with brilliants: and besides these a set of fine china for a tea-table enchased in gold, japan trunks, fans, and many gallantries of the same nature. All the men of quality at Vienna were spectators; but only the ladies had permission to shoot. . . ."

This she wrote to her sister Mar, along with a humorous description of the fashions in Vienna—the towering head-dresses of gauze over which the ladies trained their own hair, and powdered it, trimmed it with ribbons, precious stones, and all manner of monstrosities, while their "whalebone petticoats outdo ours by several yards' circumference, and cover some acres of ground."

To her friend, Lady Rich, who had a place at St. James' Court, she wrote of the manners and morals of the Viennese Court, for in doing so she allowed it to be perceived that her charms had not passed un-

noticed there, and knew that silly, pretty Lady Rich would spread the news widely at home. It was customary, she explained, for every married lady in Vienna to have a lover—one only—an arrangement which perfectly suited husbands and the world in general. Mary herself had been approached by a young spark who offered himself in such a capacity to her, and on being refused, gallantly undertook to speak to any other gentleman who pleased her, that he might arrange an affair between them; for he could not conceive that any lady should omit to provide herself with a cavalier.

To other friends she wrote of antiquities, of convents, and received from England in return a host of letters. For by departing with her husband on a mission of such dignity and importance, Mary had risen in the esteem of her world, which had already some time ago begun to note and admire the witty ingenious bride who had so recently swum into those highest ranks of fashion.

Among the letters she received came some extravagant ones from Pope, who liked to fancy himself as an amorous correspondent and admirer of distinguished ladies, and who had most certainly fallen, however superficially, a victim to the brilliant charm of Lady Mary. He took the greatest pains to write her striking letters, even warm letters:

for—while we think of Pope as a literary giant—his own age regarded him more as a dangerous gnat, respectable in proportion to his sting. It flattered the little posturing creature to consider himself a swain of the glittering Lady Mary.

Judging by the tone in which she replied to him, she viewed his raptures with a certain discomfort, though she in turn was flattered by the attentions of a man of letters already so notable. The small social world, in the heart of the great social world of England, to which she, her connections, and her family belonged was that section of the great who especially prided themselves on their patronage of literary men. She was not at all averse to counting Pope in her train—not Pope the writer, at least, in spite of his being a Catholic. Pope the man was another matter, but she judged there was little danger of his assuming the latter rôle.

"You may easily imagine," Pope wrote to her in Vienna, "how desirous I must be of a correspondence with a person who had taught me long ago that it was as possible to esteem at first sight as to love; and who has since ruined for me all the conversation of one sex, and almost all the friendship of the other. I am but too sensible, through your means, that the company of men wants a certain softness to recom-

mend it, and that of women wants everything else. . . ."

Even in an age of elegant letter-writing, no woman could remain totally unmoved by addresses in this manner from a clever man.

The Montagus left Vienna, not for Turkey, but for Hanover, where King George was comforting himself for the trouble of ruling England by imbibing a little of the German air he loved. The principal purpose of Mr. Wortley Montagu's embassy to Turkey was to attempt to negotiate a peace between the Ottomans and the King: he was called now to Hanover for further instructions. They set out in the middle of November, traversing the desolate, poverty-stricken country of Bohemia, traveling by night as well as by day, because the accommodation at the post-houses was so wretched Lady Mary would not stay in them. From Prague to Dresden they went in twenty-four hours' continuous riding. On the road, she was much alarmed as they

"passed by moonshine the frightful precipices that divide Bohemia from Saxony, at the bottom of which runs the river Elbe. . . . In many places the road was so narrow, that I could not discern an inch of space between the wheels and the precipice. Yet

I was so good a wife not to wake Mr. W——, who was fast asleep by my side, to make him share in my fears, since the danger was unavoidable, till I perceived, by the bright light of the moon, our postilions nodding on horseback, while the horses were on a full gallop, and I thought it very convenient to call out to desire them to look where they were going."

At Leipzig she was delighted to be able to buy gold stuff for herself and liveries for her pages astonishingly cheap: and then they were at last in Hanover, where, fortunately, the King gave them rooms in the Palace, for his visit had so filled the town that accommodation was almost impossible to obtain.

While Mr. Wortley Montagu put himself at the disposal of his Sovereign, Mary, who at no time seemed to interest herself in politics or statecraft, enjoyed herself. The town was full of English people and the talk of the moment was of the Duke of Wharton, a naughty lad who—married at sixteen and both brilliant and dissipated as early—now vowed himself bored with Hanover, and set off, his tutor in tow, for Italy. Writing to England, to the Countess of Bristol, Mary larded her letter with pretty praise of the King's grandson, Prince Fred-

erick. It looks very much as though she thought that the letter would be opened in transit: and that her delight in the royal boy would be pleasing in certain quarters at home. Even the manner in which she spoke of the King had nothing in common with her own private and extremely unflattering description of that monarch. But whatever she really thought of the King, Mary was impressed and astonished by the skill of his Court musicians and the magnificence of his opera-house.

Now news from England reached her again. Her friends had heard she was returning; but she of course had always longed to travel, and travel she would as long as she could. Her friends sent gossip about Addison, whose marriage to Lady Warwick, though no longer recent, was still a subject of interest, about Congreve who liked her, about the old Duke of Buckingham, and of course about the Marlboroughs. The great General had been seriously ill earlier in the year, but under the care of Mary's old friend, Doctor (now Sir Samuel) Garth had recovered sufficiently to go to Bath, in company with his imperious wife and a pretty granddaughter. Sometimes he grew worse, his faculty of speech became greatly impaired and even his reason was despaired of: then he would rally again. His wife characteristically grieved over him, exhorted him, began new

quarrels with this person and took up old quarrels with that. Unkind gossip said that even at Bath, during his convalescence, Marlborough's ruling passion still swayed him, so that he would walk home on a rainy night, ill as he was, that he might save the sixpence that a chair would have cost him.

Then there was the news which came too of Robert Walpole's wife having been brought to bed of a son that September, whose father one or two were whispering was a Hervey, not a Walpole. The astute politician had never in any case insisted on a fidelity from his wife which he had been far from giving her on his side. Mary's friend, Dolly Walpole, Lady Townshend, stood godmother to the infant Horace, who was afterward to come into Mary's life more than once.

Mary seized her pen and wrote to England frequently, but discreetly as a rule, for there was no purpose to make enemies by saying too much in a packet that could be opened anywhere by any one. So she described the profusely painted cheeks and dyed hair of the Hanoverian beauties—it was characteristic of her that she should say that all this had "a very fine effect by candle-light." Writing to her sister Mar, she commended the system of heating one's rooms in winter with stoves, which she declared she would set up in England when she returned.

And what seemed to strike her most of all was that she ate, at the King's table, not only ripe oranges but something much more novel in mid-winter, pine-apples which, like the other fruit, had been grown in greenhouses heated by stoves, a practise she thought should also certainly be instituted at home.

Mr. Wortley Montagu now received his orders—both the private ones and the written instructions over His Majesty's own signature—and set off south with his wife, child, nurse, surgeon and retinue of servants of several nationalities for Vienna again, where they arrived early in the New Year, at Carnival time. Jollities of all kinds diverted Mary once more here, though she found the Viennese balls old-fashioned and the music far too loud since the musicians had a "detestable custom of mixing hunting horns with it." Little better did she care for the custom which excluded women from appearing on the stage, for she found male actors dressed as women very awkward and absurd. This second visit to Vienna provided her with more and better material for her letters, which were already beginning to be celebrated in London, and which she probably knew were handed round, copied and admired very generally.

Now she met Prince Eugene, who warned her of the cruel and dangerous journey she proposed to

take, through "desert plains covered with snow, where the cold is so violent, many have been killed by it." This did concern her: what she thought of the military hero she did not say, but, by a guarded reference, her opinion seems not to have been favorable.

She must have regretted the necessity of leaving Vienna, for she certainly enjoyed herself there. Indeed, in her letter to the Abbé Conti—of whom she had formed a very favorable impression at Court in London the night of the Craggs mishap—she spoke so gracefully, so tenderly of a certain young Count Tarrocco, of whose fire, persuasiveness and subtlety in love-making she quite clearly had had a taste, that the great pleasures of the Imperial Court may be supposed to have resided very largely in this "accomplished," "elegant" young man.

But on she went. It must always be something of a mystery that she should choose to experience the hardships, and to expose her little boy whom she cared for to the rigors of that long journey by road in mid-winter through countries some of which had hardly any roads, while in others war was raging.

As travel has become easier it has become more alarming. Eighteenth-century ladies, to say nothing of men, thought far less of entrusting themselves to the very difficult, often dangerous and al-

ways uncomfortable means of transit at their disposal than we should of undertaking the same journey to-day, for all the railways, motors and airplanes that enable us to fall asleep in comfort in one country and wake in another. Lady Mary had provided herself with a traveling costume much like a man's save that it had a riding-habit skirt, with the man's wig she had bought in the city and a triangular hat. Her husband found nothing alarming in rattling over rugged mountains in a chaise, for he had done it before; their attendants were armed. Certainly there was at least a trace of some determination to distinguish herself by accompanying him: she was not unaware of the importance of being an ambassadress.

Edward, she had discovered long ago, had no particular ambition to shine in the world: for he was a country gentleman and that was to him exactly the finest thing in the world. She would go with him on his journey, she would shine, and shine more brilliantly by reason of her enterprise when she returned, than she had previously done.

To that end, consciously or not, her letters were shaped. There was nothing very innocent in the impulse which made her keep such careful copies of every scrap of writing she ever posted, nor in the Diary she somehow always managed to keep, and

keep very fully. Her very letters, in fact, were principally copied from the finely written pages of this all-important Diary. She did not write without an eye on the larger public.

And though it would probably be wrong to assume that Mr. Wortley Montagu insisted on her accompanying him—since he had for over two years now so little desire to be much in her presence—that same peculiar, obstinate dislike of conflict with any one which had made her unwilling to oppose openly her father at any time during her secret correspondence with her husband, ruled her now. Writing to her sister she speaks of her "principles of passive obedience" which "carry me through everything." The passive obedience was much less to Mr. Wortley Montagu—had been much less to the Duke of Kingston—than to what she secretly regarded as her destiny.

Their carriages fitted with sleds, the Montagus went through the snows, were received with deep respect everywhere, laden with gifts. When they arrived at Peterwaradin they were joined by an escort of officers and troops. Mr. Wortley Montagu despatched a courier to the Turkish pasha, demanding safe-conduct, and received a favorable reply enclosed in a purse of scarlet satin.

All being at last settled, they set out once more, in

great state, with a guard of three hundred Imperial troops. They passed over the battlefield of Carlowitz, still strewn with the "skulls and carcases of unburied men, horses and camels," and rode on to Betsko. There they were met by "an aga of the janissaries" with four hundred men, who seemed to Mary highly disposed to quarrel with the body-guard that had escorted them so far.

Janissaries were ticklish people to handle. Their special privileges as servants of the Sultan made them swell high in their own conceit, and it was impolitic even for a Western European to quarrel with them. They had been known before now to give the bastinado to indiscreet young members of ambassadorial staffs. But their fiery tempers stood the foreigner in good stead, if he was tactful with them. They could quell intrusive onlookers with a glance. They shouldered peasants out of the way, and let loose a kick and a curse at every roving dog. So great was their reputation for prompt measures that all but the most desperate brigands were calm and smiling in their presence. The Turks gave the Imperial troops a receipt for the person of His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador, and the Wortley Montagus entered a new world.

Mary took immediate advantage of it by writing to Pope of courtly and hospitable and unworldly

Turkish hosts, who entertained her with conversation (she did not say in what language) about Arabic poetry, and the advantage that Mussulmans had over Christians in remaining unaware of the fact if their wives were unfaithful to them. She followed this with a dutiful letter to the Princess of Wales, and then burst—once she was settled in Adrianople—into a tide of long romantic epistles such as immediately made her name and fame throughout the best society of Western Europe.

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It was not long before London rang with the news that Lady Mary Wortley Montagu had won the heart of the Sultan, Achmed the Third, followed before long by the gleefully whispered emendation that she had rewarded his devotion by presenting him with the liberties of her person.

Who knows where the story came from? It was in any case a foolish invention; though the folly of a rumor need not take the sting from its malice. The Grand Signior was enervated and feeble. He had grown up to manhood (as was customary for heirs to the Ottoman Empire) in an underground chamber, communicating with the outer world only through a round hole in the ceiling. After he had succeeded in a plot to depose his brother, he was far too much pleased with his freedom to show any en-

terprise or ingenuity or taste. Most of his time he spent in his seraglio, a stone's throw from the mosque of Saint Sophia, laxly amorous, lolling on a leather hammock in the gardens, tickling a luxurious bosom or slapping a generous thigh.

Mary was the last person in the world to compete for his indiscriminate and Islamic favors with the five hundred fat women of the seraglio, the forty Pages-of-the-Presence and the thousand Pages-in-Training. And the Sultan himself was far too good a Mohammedan to place any value on a woman who had once belonged to some one else. From habit and from principle he was no man to engage in illicit and dangerous liaisons. It was only on the rarest occasions that he would consent to receive into the Harem a woman who had not been reserved for him from childhood; and even then it must be done in due form; his property rights in her must be made absolute.

It was a fate which could hardly appeal to one so individualistic as Mary. Moreover, an old Jewess who sold beads and bracelets and tags and trifles to the Sultan's carefully guarded women revealed to her a state of affairs by no means idyllic. She told her of all the spites and jealousies among them; of the dreadful, sour old virgins who ordered them about and took care to revenge themselves for their

own disappointments; of the negro eunuchs specially chosen for their repulsive faces and horribly distorted bodies. Mary had seen with her own eyes the prison-seraglio across the Straits at Pera, to which were packed off, at every three-yearly review of the Grand Signior's women, whole shoals of barren, sick or antiquated charmers. It seemed to Mary, who had already revolted so much against male domination, a most dismally unattractive situation.

False rumors of her conquest of the Sultan were probably prepared by one of her own letters, dozens of copies of which were soon circulating privately, describing a visit she had paid to the Turkish baths. It conveys, whether deliberately or not, a typically carnal point of view. The ladies and gentlemen of that time were as anatomical, conversationally, as they were frank in their speech and in their personal habits. But Mary's description, without being in the least anatomical, was apt to seem to her English readers rather provocative, just as to-day an Englishman who will on occasion use unprintable and anatomical conversation can still be expected to gloat over the painting of Ingres—so like the verbal description of the scene Lady Mary conjured up.

She had gone, while passing through Sofia with her husband, privately and *incognito* in a gaily painted, silk-curtained Turkish coach to the baths.

There in a marble-paved room, with cold fountains and steamy hot baths, were two hundred women, who greeted the visitor in her riding-habit with great courtesy and charm.

"The first sofas were covered with cushions and rich carpets, on which sat the ladies; and on the second, their slaves behind them, but without any distinction of rank by their dress, all being in the state of nature, that is, in plain English, stark naked, without any beauty or defect concealed. Yet there was not the least wanton smile or immodest gesture among them . . . most of their skins shiningly white, only adorned by their beautiful hair divided into many tresses, hanging on their shoulders, braided either with pearl or ribbon, perfectly representing the figures of the Graces. . . . To tell you the truth, I had wickedness enough to wish secretly that Mr. Jervas could have been there invisible. I fancy it would have very much improved his art, to see so many fine women naked, in different postures. . . .

"The lady that seemed the most considerable among them, entreated me to sit by her, and would fain have undressed me for the bath. I excused myself with some difficulty. They being all so earnest in persuading me, I was at last forced to open my

shirt, and shew them my stays; which satisfied them very well, for, I saw, they believed I was so locked up in that machine, that it was not in my power to open it, which contrivance they attributed to my husband."

The next item of news to reach London was that the fair traveler had adopted Turkish costume. As she told her sister:

"The first piece of my dress is a pair of drawers, very full, that reach to my shoes, and conceal the legs more modestly than your petticoats. They are of a thin rose-coloured damask, brocaded with silver flowers, my shoes of white kid leather, embroidered with gold. Over this hangs my smock, of a fine white silk gauze, edged with embroidery. This smock has wide sleeves hanging half-way down the arm, and is closed at the neck with a diamond button; but the shape and colour of the bosom very well to be distinguished through it. The *antery* is a waistcoat, made close to the shape, of white and gold damask. . . . My *caftan*, of the same stuff, with my drawers, is a robe exactly fitted to my shape, and reaching to my feet, with very long, straight falling sleeves. Over this is the girdle of about four fingers broad, which all that can afford have entirely of dia-

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in Turkish dress

After a drawing in the possession of the Earl of Harrington

monds or other precious stones. . . . The *Curdee* is a loose robe they throw off or put on according to the weather, being of a rich brocade (mine is green and gold), either lined with ermine or sables. . . . The head-dress is composed of a cap, called *talpock,* which is in winter of fine velvet embroidered with pearls or diamonds, and in summer of a light shining silver stuff. This is fixed on one side of the head. . . . "

She was going about a great deal with Madame de Bonnac, wife of the French Ambassador, both of them accompanied by an immense retinue of footmen, ushers and maidens in attendance. Mary's letters made it seem that, if the two of them did not actually experience any adventures, at least she was much struck by the ease with which the veiled ladies of the East could carry on intrigues, their morals being, as she said, just like those of Christian ladies.

" 'Tis impossible for the most jealous husband to know his wife when he meets her; and no man dare either touch or follow a woman in the street. . . . "

"You may easily imagine the number of faithful wives very small in a country where they have nothing to fear from a lover's indiscretion. . . . The

great ladies seldom let their gallants know who they are."

As she suited her letters to her correspondents, Mary wrote in a romantic vein to Pope now: describing her house "on the banks of the Hebrus," her garden "full of tall cypress-trees, upon the branches of which several couples of turtles are saying soft things to one another from morning till night."

The landscape she paints is full of picturesque figures, listening to music in the shade, weaving garlands for lambs, dancing in a troop to a soft gay tune. She paraphrases a love-poem for him, and becomes critical of versification.

In other letters Mary showed herself to be a woman of great determination and practical ability, who never hesitated to put an idea that appeared to her a right one into practise. She noticed that smallpox which—she knew to her cost, for it had endangered her own life recently and taken her brother away young—was fatal in England was comparatively harmless in the East. She noticed what the Turks did:

"People send to one another to know if any of their family has a mind to have the smallpox: they make parties for this purpose, and when they are

met . . . the old woman comes with a nut-shell of the matter of the best sort of smallpox, and asks what veins you please to have opened. She immediately rips open that you offer her with a large needle . . . and puts into the vein as much venom as can lie upon the head of her needle, and after binds up the little wound with a hollow bit of shell; and in this manner opens four or five veins. . . . The children of your patients play together all the rest of the day, are in perfect health to the eighth. Then the fever begins to seize them, and they keep their beds two days, very seldom three . . . and in eight days' time are as well as before their illness."

And just as she had not hesitated to send her little boy, as a tiny baby, to be dipped in a cold well in order to strengthen him, so now she fearlessly had the old woman come and scratch him with the smallpox matter. At the time this news caused less comment than the fact that she had bought a mummy to bring home, or that she had dined with the Sultana and been bored, and visited the beautiful Fatima, wife of the powerful Deputy to the Vizier, whom she found astonishingly beautiful and charming. But she was destined to make the Turkish cure for smallpox more talked of than even mummies or fair Turkish ladies.

At the end of February, 1718, she was safely brought to bed of a little daughter. Early in July her husband was recalled; he, she, the babies, and their retinue went on board a man-of-war and sailed through the Greek Archipelago to Tunis, thence to Genoa, where they disembarked and took the road to Paris.

Every place afforded her the occasion for at least one long letter, sometimes more. The sight of so many antiquities, so many spots famed in classical literature, set her afire with desire to record. There was nothing so thrilling to a gentleman of her times —and by reflection to a lady—as classical remains: and Mary gave Pope and all her other correspondents good measure. She even copied inscriptions for them, and gave them a little lesson in Greek history from time to time in exactly the same forthright manner in which she would name Correggio a better painter than Raphael, and cry out against "objects of horror."

"The more naturally a crucifix is represented, the more disagreeable it is." Similarly, the ladies of Paris painted far too much, the French King was "well-shaped," people in Paris generally stared too much; and, arrived at last at Dover, after a great tossing at sea, she wrote:

"After having seen part of Asia and Africa, and almost made the tour of Europe, I think the honest English squire more happy, who verily believes the Greek wines less delicious than March beer; that the African fruits have not so fine a flavour as golden-pippins; . . . and that, in short, there is no perfect enjoyment of this life out of Old England. I pray God I may think so for the rest of my life."

Were her opinions as changeable as the scenes that had passed before her in that year's absence? Her cry of despair—the cry of one who has seen much and who has not been very happy—occurs in a letter to the Abbé Conti, to whom she, for some reason or other, wrote more openly, more personally, than to any other of her correspondents. It was only a little while that she had known him, only since that evening at Court when she had talked Newtonian principles with him; the acquaintance had merely been renewed in a transitory way during her stay in Paris.

But Conti was a wise man, and very much a man of the world. She had too much sense to try to impress him: she attempted instead to confide in him. There are phrases of hers in other of her letters to the Abbé which sound strange and significant. Speaking of the Turks she said:

"I am almost of opinion they have a right notion of life; while they consume it in music, gardens, wine and delicate eating, we are tormenting our brains with some scheme of politics, or studying some science to which we can never attain, or if we do, cannot persuade people to set that value upon it we do ourselves. 'Tis certain what we feel and see is properly (if any thing is properly) our own; but the good of fame, the folly of praise, hardly purchased, and, when obtained, poor recompense for loss of time and health. We grow old and decrepid before we can reap the fruit of our labors. Considering what short-lived weak animals men are, is there any study so beneficial as the study of present pleasure? I dare not pursue this theme; perhaps I have already said too much, but I depend upon the true knowledge you have of my heart."

The safe-conduct she had received to the empire of the Turks had not proved to be that passport for the country of happiness for which she had always longed: no more than had the marriage contract so romantically, so invitingly arrived at after all her long voyage through the avenues of sentimental warfare with Mr. Wortley Montagu.

The fame she calculated had been won for her by

her voyage and by her letters, now awaiting her in London, looked already to this purposeful woman rather a hollow reward. It seemed that she might decide to abandon the search for fame for that of pleasure.

CHAPTER VII

KING AND PRINCE

In the oceans of gossip, Mary's return to London created a tidal wave.

Not to have been to her informal morning receptions, where her more intimate friends of both sexes could finger her Turkish costumes, goggle at her foreign servants, price her new lace, new knick-knacks, and new jewels, and watch her—in the hands of her maid and her good-looking Italian valet de chambre and hairdresser—being embellished for the day, was to be utterly unfashionable. Not to have been at least once to her evening assemblies was ruin.

Second only to gossip about the Prince of Wales and his recent and apparently total rupture with his father, the King, was gossip about Mary. Every one was discussing her curious Turkish miniature paintings, her marvelously bound copy of the Koran, which read backward (as one could see for one's self by handling it), and repeating to each other with considerable variations her stories of the

beau-monde in Vienna and Adrianople, of Prince Eugene's latest amours and the proceedings of the veiled ladies of the harems.

Nothing was diminished in the telling. At Bath, which was now emptying since winter had come, it was definitely stated over the card-tables that she had brought back two eunuchs as personal attendants. At Tunbridge Wells one lady, whose cousin's maid had heard it from Lady Gower's own servant, stated definitely that Lady Mary had adopted the Mohammedan religion.

Old Mr. Sidney Montagu awoke from the lethargy that was settling on him in Yorkshire as a consequence of the long life of depravity which he had so much enjoyed, and which even he now knew was drawing to a close, to cackle unpleasantly over the thought of his daughter-in-law, whose spirit he admired, and the Sultan. Perhaps he did not believe all he heard, but he loved hearing it. Strait-laced women had never been to his taste, and he thought his son Edward a prig, whose wife had a perfect right to all she cared to snatch from brief mortal existence.

In London, there were infinite conversations in Bloomsbury and St. James' and out in Chelsea and Islington homes about the Wortley Montagus. A duel was fought one evening in Lincoln's Inn Fields

between two middle-aged gentlemen who ventured to differ with each other as to whether or no Lady Mary were more beautiful before or after she had resided in the East, though neither of them knew or had ever seen her.

It was pretty generally said that Mr. Wortley Montagu had come home richer than he went—which happened to be a fact. And every mother was anxious to see his little boy, Edward, and the scars on his arm, where he had been engrafted with the smallpox venom. Copies of Lady Mary's letters were handed about and copied again, sent to country cousins: her poems of 1716, much as they had been praised at their first appearance, were now got by heart by young girls, since their author was the sensation of the smart world.

Mary herself was besieged with visits and with invitations, and plagued with questions. She noted a little stir and many stares everywhere she went and hurled herself into all this excitement with great energy. Because she suspected that, if she ceased long enough to examine if she were happy, she would find she was not, she threw herself into everything without stopping to ask for what purpose at all. And at the root of her new suspicion, that pleasure rather than fame was the thing to aim for, was that same lurking desire to rise above others, to

Lady Mary Pierrepoint

From an engraving after a miniature by Caroline Watson

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu
upon her return from Constantinople

From an engraving by Caroline Watson of a painting by Richardson

His Majesty was very gracious and said in his funny way that he loved you. My lord your father smiled again, but after we were come home he told me, he thought perhaps Doctor Garth had asked you if you could see any such practise, for some physician had, he fancied, given an account of such a custom, a little while since, at the Royal Society. 'Lady Mary,' says he, 'loved always what was new.' But you know, child, I fancy he was pleased that His Majesty spoke of you so, and will have you come to see us more, for I vow I wish you would, my lord being so much away. Now when will you come? I will, I positively will bear this little thing away with me, no denial. Why, child, the boy is my grandson, and no man-baby ever had a younger or sweeter, did you, chuck?"

And her thin, silver laughter tinkled through the room, and rang even after Master Edward, having been seized by a woman he fancied a stranger and a dangerous one, screamed lustily and would have kicked her. The Duchess let him go in disgust.

"La, the naughty child, I detest him," she cried, and straightway began chattering about his nurse, who soon went out of the room, giving the Duchess another glimpse of an equally foreign-looking upper man-servant, now sitting at his ease in the still only half-furnished hall.

By the time her stepmother had consented to drink a little wine and taste a piece of Turkish sweetmeat, over which she squalled and fluttered more than ever, Mary was feeling quite bewildered. Her girlish little stepmother always made her feel rather clumsy and obtuse: it seemed so very strange that this pretty absurd creature should be her father the gallant, the terrifying, the elegant Duke of Kingston's wife. Why, she would have made him a better wife herself! At last, by promising faithfully and gushingly that she and her husband would come and drink tea with her two days after, the Duchess was persuaded to depart again, hopped into her chair and was whisked away down the street.

Little Edward came back and climbed up in the window now to watch her go; the remark that he made was fortunately not in English, else his mother would have shaken him. He had picked up some curious words in several languages from the odd collection of servants and people he had known during the last year or so. Mary absently smoothed down his dress and stood behind him in the window gazing out.

She was roused first by the rat-tat of a footman leaving cards for her and then by the Italian steward coming in, with inquiries of what she would have for dinner three nights later when the Duchess

of Montagu and five others were coming to visit them, and as to where he should order the stupidest of the new English footmen to put the curious Chinese cabinet she had bought in Paris.

Dolly Walpole came to drink tea with her, Lady Bristol sent word she begged a visit from her, old Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, particularly despatched a young relation on horseback from Windsor, where she was living at the moment, with the kindest messages from the Duke, who was still very ill, and a desire to see her as soon as she could come to them.

The Venetian Ambassadress, Madame Tron, called and asked Mary point-blank if she had taken any Mohammedan vows. Upon hearing no, she replied: "I'll lay you always preferred Christians," and laughed. Mary was rather put out. Madame Tron was a singular person, always called *"Prenez garde à mon visage,"* because her husband was said to beat her furiously every time she was, or he fancied she was, unfaithful to him. And she made no secret of this, but told every one how jealous he was, adding, "but I always tell him, *prenez garde à mon visage.*" However, Mary was very civil to the lady, and bade her affectionately come to a party of music the following week: and curtsied her out.

Hardly was that over when the Princess of Wales

sent a handsome young groom of the bedchamber, Lord Hervey's young brother John, to request dear Lady Mary to come and see her. It was bad enough, Mary thought, to have a whole house to see to—for Edward was only anxious to be off to Wortley and Wharncliffe on family affairs the minute he could render account of all his Turkish business with the powers that controlled ambassadorial activities—besides having to go bumping in one's best (and the best hardly unpacked yet, though delightfully fresh from Paris) to tell the rather severe Princess and the definitely stupid Prince all about her travels.

But of course at the same time she loved that same bustle, disorder, the demand for her society, the fame, the home-coming in some glory, except that the glory was hers and not her husband's. In fact she rather gathered, though he told her quite different, that Edward was really somewhat in disgrace. He himself told her (and showed her Addison's letter to that effect), that the King wanted him back home, that he had high prospects, and all that. But as a matter of fact he had simply been recalled; and she rather fancied, now, in such a way as meant he would get nothing else, at any rate for a time. She remembered, on thinking things over, a curious sentence in Aaron Hill's book on Turkey which she and Edward had read before their journey. It said that

with only one exception no English ambassador to the Porte had ever succeeded in pleasing both the Turks and the English, since if he pleased the Turks it was understood that he had received bribes, and if not, he succeeded in no enterprise. Mary wondered very much which Edward had done, fancied she knew, and thought the worse of him, though money was a thing she dearly loved.

And as in any case she had ceased some years past to think Edward either brilliant or promising, whether as a courtier or a politician, had even ceased to find him interesting and judged already that he had a formal, infertile sort of mind, she was not surprised; but she was none the less secretly angry with him. For while she herself was now, probably, in an excellent position in the world's eyes, it did take off from her glory a little that she had an inglorious husband. The ambitious wife who will pardon that is rare.

She managed to drag Edward with her two days later when she went to her father's. Entering the Arlington Street house always gave her a most curious sensation, and being guest to her father's new wife in the house that had once been hers did not quite please her. After they had sipped some Pekoe and admired the Duchess's little dog, listened to her rattle, and answered her ceaseless questions for a

while, the Duke came sauntering in. Mary rose and swept to the ground, Edward rose and bowed with the correct degree of humility, of deprecation and grace.

"Come, daughter, kiss me," the Duke said rather languidly, raising Mary with one hand and extending the other, as he pressed her in a rather casual fashion to his bosom, toward his son-in-law. The Duchess had become as silent as if some one had suddenly broken her mainspring: she offered him some bonbons which he took and munched, throwing himself into a chair and lolling with his legs out, poking a long fine toe now and then at the little dog which gazed inscrutably at him, crouched close to the ground.

The Duke of Kingston, after bidding his daughter and son-in-law be seated again, touched airily on political matters; and Mary listened. Was he not, in fact, telling her husband (she fancied) that his chances of preferment were little and advising him to throw himself vigorously in with the Opposition? She had known that the death of Halifax followed by that of her father's old friend, Somers, was unlucky for her ambitions to see Edward succeed. Now that Townshend and Walpole were both out of office too, and the King quarreled with the Prince of Wales, it was difficult for her to grasp the situation.

He himself, she gathered, had remained of the King's party perhaps from laziness; she resolved, however, that Edward, and if not Edward, then certainly she herself, should be of the Prince's faction, since to-morrow he would be King. This formed in her mind as her father spoke, and by a sidelong glance he gave she fancied he meant she should gather this to be her best course. But of Edward somehow she felt she had little hope. He seemed so sour and so stilted beside that very great man, as she still saw him, her father.

Apparently the Royal quarrel had occurred because the King against the Prince's wish insisted on the Duke of Newcastle being sponsor to the Princess's latest baby. The Prince threatened Newcastle; Newcastle told the King; the King flew into a rage and sent three Dukes, one of whom was Mary's father, to ask the Prince what he meant, and received no reply likely to soothe an outraged father. And so the Prince and Princess were practically "put outside" the Palace. And no one who visited them might go to Court, which, as it happened, apparently no one wanted to do now, since all the world flocked to the Prince's. "Well," thought Mary, "and so will I go, but I will go to Court as well."

When she went to Leicester House where the

Prince and Princess were now established in separate pomp, she decked herself in her best—a considerable effort for her, because though her clothes were always fine she did not always wear them to what she knew was advantage. She put on her jewels and her new lace, and at an impulse added a little rouge to heighten the effect of her eyes. And with her little boy on her knee, another afterthought, rode thoughtfully along to Leicester Fields borne by her odd-looking but smartly liveried footmen.

She was announced and admitted at once, and the Princess, besides the honor of receiving her privately like this, was especially gracious, bidding the little boy Edward, who fortunately was on his best behavior, kiss her and bending down that he might. Very soon the Prince came in, yawning from his afternoon nap. Mary was honored by being bid seat herself, and soon had the Royal pair entranced by a simple short account of her stay abroad, just a word now and then of Mr. Wortley Montagu and how earnest and busy he had been. Then of course the Princess, who had heard of it from Lady Rich, wanted to see the child's arm. Little Edward, very proud of his scars, artlessly told the Princess himself how Mr. Maitland, my lady mama's surgeon, had "scwatched" him, and that he lay in bed after, and that now he was quite

well and his mama said now he could never get the nasty smallpox. Oh, it all went off beautifully. The Princess vowed that she must consult her own doctors about it. *"C'est très interessant,"* said the Prince, and ogled Lady Mary and snubbed the Princess.

Mary left the Royal household well pleased, and shook little Edward cruelly on the way home because he was creasing her gown by wriggling. And who should be there waiting to present his compliments when she got back, but that queer, misshapen, complimentary, clever little Mr. Pope, who had written to her so often, and stayed half an hour pouring out venomous gossip and saccharine addresses.

Edward came in before he departed, and was delighted to see him, as he always was delighted with any man of letters. The pair of them left for the coffee-house, and Mary, a high color on her cheeks and humming a little air, set about ordering her husband's effects for his solitary departure next morning for Wharncliffe. Her return was going extremely well.

Edward came home early, only a very little drunk.

"That little Mr. Pope of yours wants me very much, my dear," he said, when he came to her later,

"to think upon taking a house on Thameside at Twickenham, where he himself is settling. In the summer it seems it is mighty agreeable." And with a great yawn, honest Mr. Wortley Montagu climbed into the bed. His wife, as was often her way, lay awake long after him, her thoughts moving swiftly this way and that. A country residence near London might prevent her being immured in Yorkshire country: she most certainly would speak with little Mr. Pope about his idea again. For in or near London she saw her life just now a wholly agreeable prospect.

Despite the embargo laid on all who visited the Prince and Princess, Mary affected to be perfectly innocent, and presented herself at Court. The King was a little cold, and did not speak to her for half an hour, though he looked now and then toward her, as she stood talking with the Duke of Kent, her father's crony, and little Mr. Handel, who made them laugh with the very queer way he spoke English. He was describing the trouble he had had with one of the female singers in his company. Their group was joined by Lord Lumley, then Master of the Horse, an elegant person Mary had never met before but felt curious about. Her sister Frances had confided to her that there was a deal of talk about their stepmother, the Duchess of Kingston,

and this charmer who had been seen often in her company. And sure enough, here was her stepmother, decked with streamers, jewels, a fan, and her inevitable little dog, sweeping in, laughing, and, after her duties to Royalty and its ungainly female satellites, tripping up to them and ogling Lord Lumley openly.

Mary felt suddenly sorry for the little Duchess, so foolish, so harmless: there was a look on Lumley's face, the look of a man who knows he is admired, loved perhaps, and laughs to himself. Perhaps she had fancied it; she turned away from them.

The King motioned her to him, asked of Prince Eugene, his old military associate, of Constantinople, of the strange engrafting for the smallpox of which he had heard speak. He grew kinder in manner as he spoke: Mary gathered she was forgiven for having visited the disgraced Prince, for certainly he knew of it: nothing was unknown to him. The King was asking after her little son, with a wry expression, and when she told him the child was well but growing very mischievous, added: "May he be a happiness to you in your old age, Miladi." She curtsied, and after a few words with Mademoiselle Schulemberg (who had been transformed now into a British peeress and was promoted Duchess of Ken-

dal) was glad to see the King retire. It had been a dull and not altogether pleasant function, though she was handed to her chair by three or four gallants.

When she got home there was a note, once more, from Mr. Pope with some lines of verse in his own hand, some pretty compliments. She laughed and laid it aside.

But the next day he called on her, and again a few days later. And Edward, who had met him meanwhile at Button's Club, spoke to her again about Twickenham whither the poet was just then moving, telling her he had begged Pope to look out for a suitable house for them the next summer.

It was on a sudden impulse that Mary begged Edward to sit down and talk with her a moment about his own affairs. She knew, of course, as every one did, what power the Duchess of Kendal, that "ugly old trull," had with the King: that almost anything could be obtained through her services, for a price, by any loyal Whig with a sufficiently long purse. And, since she had had the idea of speaking to Edward on this subject partly in order to find out what he would say and to discover also what his plans were, she quite delicately, in quite a nice wifely way, suggested that perhaps a little business transaction might be discussed with the ugly old duchess,

if he wanted * * * well, if he were thinking of a place about the Court, or fancied something in the Government. Edward was simply furious. And it wasn't that he hated parting with the money merely, but that he had really deep-rooted, sincere principles so far as political life in England was concerned. And, a thing that Mary never dreamed of, he was absolutely certain that he was a remarkable man and that recognition was bound to come to him sooner or later. It would have been an admission of inadequacy on his own part to stoop to bribery, as almost every one else did that expected to rise.

He screamed abuse at her. There was a complete quarrel which lasted some time and was never patched up, it only quieted down sulkily, and gradually was thought of no more, leaving a good deal of bad feeling between them. From that moment she never consulted him again, never confided in him—indeed, she had no great impulse to do that—and simply concerned herself with her own affairs, on which she kept her own counsel or shared it merely with her sister.

Mary flung herself now into a life very much like the life of any woman of her own rank, save that she was more studious, more witty, asked more and got less out of everything. In the mornings she saw the two children, the servants, read a little, dressed

herself, and now and then went to Leicester House, where the Prince and Princess held a reception daily.

In the afternoons she went shopping with her sister, and came back with all kinds of things she did not want and could hardly afford out of her personal allowance. Unfortunately, Mary could never resist anything in the nature of a lottery, a raffle or a gamble. She always meant to resist temptation of the kind: but there was so much of it. The streets—hideously noisy with all the wagons, wains, coaches, light carts carrying coals, furniture or cord-wood which rumbled incessantly in the daytime over the cobble-stones—echoed from early morning till sunset with hawkers crying wares of all kinds. And mingled with the noise of the women who bawled their wares of milk or fresh fish, the peddlers who howled for customers for ink or for knives to grind and chairs to mend, children with herbs and cresses from the country, the yapping and quarreling of dogs, were the cries of the fruit-sellers ready to play against any customer with dice for apples or oranges or Kentish cherries.

More than this, the small dark shops of Pall Mall and the Strand and the City were always alluring. There was little enough to see in their small, bow-fronted windows save pamphlets: shop-gazing was

unheard of. But inside almost any shop there might be almost anything, and customers there too were led—indolent and time-wasting as most of them were—to buy tickets in a raffle for a new piece of rare Indian silk, imported porcelain, some gloves, fine French stockings, a brass-studded cowhide trunk, a Chinese screen or a painting of a famous dwarf at the Moscow Court, recently imported from Russia.

Mary would slip off with a friend to gaze upon and purchase these things, lounge in the back of a tea-house sipping a sample bowl of the latest delivery of the herb from the East with which the merchants tempted their patrons to purchase. In many of the shops there were little rooms off, or parlors over, where men and women met each other in a hazardous privacy, perhaps only for conversation, but sometimes not only for that. A hooded figure would whisk through the shop: Mary and her circle would scream with laughter over guessing who it might be. Colonel Charteris would stroll in and out again, spying for some tradesman's daughter to ruin: there were music-shops like "The Golden Viol" on Ludgate Hill where the latest song could be bought and little impromptu concerts might take place at any hour of the day.

News would come of a great sailing ship newly

arrived in the Thames from the Indies: Mary would be off at once with two or three other eager ladies for the first chance at whatever rarity might be aboard her. And she would come home with a Mandarin idol or a monkey, because it was fashionable to ride abroad with a monkey on a chain, or a macaw that spoke Portuguese, according to the ship's master, but proved dumb save for raucous screams and bit the children, or a little parcel of fresh vanilla beans, or cloves for the kitchen. The Duchess of Montagu would send her a note of a small, healthy, black slave-boy for sale cheap, near Change Alley, and of course she rushed out and bought the creature, and then there was more expense in dressing him in fine colors with a turban and hours of weariness training him to wait on her.

She was always in need of stays, or a new hood fur-lined because the weather was so cold, or aprons (since everybody wore laced aprons in the morning now, though nobody knew why), or artificial flowers, or stuff for a gown for herself, or a caricature of the Duchess of Kendal, or a book of new poems. There was never time to do all she wanted.

If she went, as she did now and then, to her sister Gower's, she not only invariably lost money at cards, which were played there from morning to night, but generally had to lend sister Evelyn some too. Lady

Gower simply did nothing at all but play cards, either at home or at some acquaintance's house, and she was always up to the eyes in difficulties. Nor was Mary herself without monetary troubles. Edward was ridiculously strict, made her keep accounts in much greater detail than most of her friends did, and threatened to pack her and the children off for ever to the north if he caught her dabbling on the Exchange, which she did nevertheless, because she loved money, and cooked her accounts as best she might after she lost.

There was always some festivity to go to, and she almost always went. Young Lord Burlington gave an endless succession of admirable musical entertainments at his house in Piccadilly. The Duke of Montagu held wild revels in which he played strange pranks and practical jokes on his guests. There were excursions by boat up the river, or hunting at Richmond with the Prince's circle, or an excursion along the dangerous, thief-invested Edgware Road for a visit and to marvel at the Duke of Chandos' immense new palace at Cannons. The guests would eye it with interest, not only for its ceilings painted by Italians, its theater, its columns and vistas, but because it had been built out of the huge fortune which the gouty old Duke had unscrupulously amassed when he was Paymaster-General

under Marlborough. And they would whisper animatedly, as they collected in the gorgeous Chapel with its painted windows, to hear their host's little company of fine musicians render one of Handel's new anthems, composed at Cannons for the master of the house, Handel's patron.

There was hardly time to sleep: there was the Opera, which the King liked so much, where Mary's old friend Nicolini was singing, more brilliantly than ever: there were the masquerades at the King's Theater, Haymarket, to which every one went to flirt under a disguise. If the Prince of Wales himself had a soldier's contempt for literature, his wife loved philosophy, and those who flocked around them both made a fashion of wit. Wit was a part of the necessary accomplishment of a man or woman, and Mary shone here. She was better instructed than most, more audacious, more fearless, less scrupulous, and fouler-mouthed on occasion than any of the other ladies, and cleverer than most of the men. She and her sister Mar, and her little admirer Mr. Pope, were in the thick of all the movement of the great world of fashion and the lesser worlds of pleasure and art that revolved around it; she knew all the scandal, met every one, visited everywhere; it was easy for her to talk brilliantly.

At her own parties, where the unkind said food

was as scarce as conversation was plentiful (neither Mary nor Edward had a gift for hospitality), she would sometimes collect the queerest people. Her drawing-room was not celebrated for its looseness, but for its interest.

Here one might meet one day the sober Elizabeth Elstob, the celebrated Anglo-Saxon scholar. Another day Harry Carey, the poet, would dash off the words to a new ditty; or Mrs. Astell, worthy member of the new tribe of writing women, would engage all the company in a debate on Platonism. Walpole would look in with Edward when the House of Commons rose after dinner, and stay with them, bringing now Colonel Selwyn, now Steele. Congreve, whom Mary loved, would join them. The little page would serve biscuits and wine, and the monkey would tear some one's breeches and give opportunity for a smutty jest, and they would all sit down to cards until it was time for supper.

Then the party broke up and betook itself to one or other of the club-houses and taverns. Mary and such ladies as cared for pleasure more than their beds would go too, and sit in the smoke and take snuff and drink ale and eat pie and listen to the music which a fiddler, a 'cellist, and a new performer on the spinet were executing at one end of the dark room, and talk, and talk, and talk. Now and

then a servant would come to guide a drunken master home; now and then there would be quarrels.

In the midst of all her other activities Mary was beset by endless letters and visits from mothers who wanted to know about the smallpox cure. The year 1719 brought to England, and especially to London, one of the worst epidemics of that dread disorder: several thousand people died of it, and thousands more were disfigured by it. Mary herself inoculated some scores of children; her surgeon, Maitland, treated others. Nearly all of them lived, after a mild attack of the disease. The Princess of Wales was especially interested in the experiments, for she loved anything that the Church detested. And already several eminent divines had spoken disapprovingly of this new impious interference with the designs of Providence.

Mary was the most famous woman in London.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GAME OF LIFE

The Wortley Montagus found a house to let on the Piazza, Covent Garden, which suited them much better than the one in Cavendish Square. They decided to move. Covent Garden was a social center of the town then: on two sides were the arcades, and on the south side the wall of Bedford House garden and a grove of trees under which the fruit-market was held. Gay wrote:

> "Where Covent Garden's famous temple stands
> That boasts the work of Jones' immortal hands,
> Columns with plain magnificence appear,
> And graceful porches lead along the square.
> Here oft my course I tend when lo, from far
> I spy the furies of the football war,
> The prentice quits his shop to join the crew,
> Increasing crowds the flying game pursue."

The same prentices, not content with football in the graveled square itself, in the center of which was a great column, were often in hot water because they played cricket under the arcades. And while people

of fashion lived there, so did another kind of person. Covent Garden had been famous for long as the abode of women of the town, and it still was. Its neighborhood was infested besides with pickpockets and bands of desperate crooks of all kinds. It was not for nothing that footmen carried staves in those days: besides helping to lever coaches out of the mud, they served to lay about the backs of molesting thieves; and if gentlemen carried sticks as well as swords, those who were not gentlemen carried cudgels.

To this lively center of the metropolis Edward and Mary moved. They dismissed some of the foreign servants they had brought from abroad, engaged others, but kept Mary's pet, the little black boy. The baby girl was trotting about already; little Edward plagued the life out of his nurses.

Of Mr. Wortley Montagu himself Mary saw little but in company; in any case it was highly unfashionable for man and wife to go about together. Edward took his Parliamentary work most seriously, and spent the greater part of his evenings at Button's, the coffee-house so conveniently placed in Covent Garden. Though he was not much of a speaker, he prepared his speeches conscientiously. Mary smiled secretly at the knowledge that, marked on the fair copy from which he read his perorations,

a sort of acting directions was indicated. At such a passage, he was to "look up," or "cough," at another one to "sink the voice."

Mary thought him absurd. His chief pleasure was, as it had been for years before, the amassing of wealth and the spending of far less than he could afford. His hobby was collecting antique medals. His relaxation was mathematics, at which he was stubbornly diligent rather than brilliant. All about the house in the Piazza lay little bits of paper, with remarks scrawled on them about the calculus, and acid comment on Leibnitz and approbation of Newton. He corresponded with dilettante philosophers and liked to think he had inspired ideas which afterward appeared, beautifully transfigured, in the more serious journals of the day.

Now Addison was gone (and he mourned him sincerely) Edward had almost entirely neglected the classics for science; he used to work himself up into a positive fever on any question of currency, and held forth with great vigor and almost no eloquence on the evils of this iniquitous dabbling in stocks which, he prophesied, would certainly bring ruin in its train, and on the necessity for preserving the sobriety and prudent stability of the Bank of England. He and Walpole were almost the only two men in London who bothered to protest about the

Covent Garden as it appeared at the time of the Wortley Montagus' residence

From an engraving in the Print Room of the British Museum

all-prevalent stock-jobbing, in which every one from Royalty itself down to the porters, standing at the street corners ready to run errands, flung themselves. And even Walpole and Wortley Montagu were not above dabbling in stocks, privately.

And little Mr. Pope?

He was becoming rather a serious problem to Mary. All the previous year he had been immured at Twickenham, save for the rarest and shortest visits. The translation of the *Iliad* was proving so very profitable that he had good reason to set himself to the task of the *Odyssey* too. To do it in town he found impossible, because life in town entailed more heavy drinking than his sickly little frame could stand. And so he had sought a country retreat, and amused himself by performing wonders and miracles in his five-acre garden there, by way of distraction.

When he did come rarely up to London he presented himself faithfully at Cavendish Square to pay his respects to Mary, and gather up the news of the town. And now that he was completing his Homer, he began to come more and more frequently, and to express himself more and more warmly to Mary.

They both thoroughly misunderstood each other from the first. Both were completely wrapped up in

themselves, and their own feelings and sensations; both were utterly incapable of friendship, as most people understand it; both were cursed with sharp eyes, sharper tongues, a delight in the misfortunes of others, unstable and almost inhuman emotions which centered in their lively brains rather than in their hearts and nerves. But Pope was really dazzled by Lady Mary, and Lady Mary regarded Pope rather as she did her monkey (but it was dead now) and her black boy. It pleased her when Scipio, the page, rolled his eyes adoringly at her and treasured her fan or a dropped kerchief and sulked in jealousy while the valet was dressing her hair. Just in the same way it pleased her when Mr. Pope paid her compliments and addressed her in the warmly gallant terms current in their circles. The distance between them was enormous, in her opinion, and if he flattered her—well, what else were poets for?

And while Pope was not really in the least serious about his heated admiration for Mary—except that he could talk wittily to her, and throw off an epigram on Juvenal in return for one she threw him on Horace (and used again the same day at Leicester House)—he was serious enough in his addresses to her, because she was the most brilliant woman of the day, and it was good for him, he thought, to belong to her retinue. As a matter of fact, he was

admitted, when he came, to the closest intimacy that any of her acquaintance enjoyed, sat on her bed as she drank her morning chocolate scanning the contents of the day's newspaper, complimented her on the form and the color of her bosom, which was in evidence because that was the fashion: helped her choose a ribbon, and now and then helped her to polish one of the poems that dropped from her pen.

At rare moments he suddenly felt suspicious of her—she would order him just a trifle too sharply to fetch her something, or tinge her conversation with too much teasing and malice.

Now again he felt curiously elated and most of all when Edward definitely commissioned him to find a house at Twickenham for them. He rushed away home, trotted about everywhere, inquired in the village which places were to be let, wrote to Kneller, who knew of a house that was vacant, sent a messenger back to Covent Garden with the good news.

His friends regarded him as being definitely enamored with Lady Mary; they did not of course suspect anything in the nature of an intrigue, because Pope, just over four feet high, miserably unhealthy, repulsive and deformed, was never regarded by any one in the light of a successful lover. But he himself encouraged them to think of him as romantically and hopelessly in love.

And acquaintance with him certainly spurred Mary on to more serious poetical efforts. She had a reputation for letters already, and felt that she must continue to deserve it.

But the leisure left her in which to invoke the muse was sadly restricted. There was always some new sensation, some new festivity. The old Duchess of Marlborough, for instance, wanted to come to London for a few days on urgent matters, and as Marlborough House was closed, would dear Lady Mary have her? Naturally, Lady Mary would. The urgent matter proved to be that the old Duchess had a fancy to make her peace with George I, who, she believed, thought her disaffected. So Mary warned her friend, the Duchess of Montagu, her violent old guest's daughter, to avoid her house like the plague, for fear old Sarah, her mother, should tear her eyes out if she saw her, and arranged for old Sarah to have a private interview with the Duchess of Kendal, so that she might convey her duty to His Majesty by that channel.

Mary went with her to the interview, and noticed that old Sarah did not go empty-handed, though she came away so. All that resulted, however, was a cold curt note dictated by the King, who could not write English, and knew that the old Duchess did not understand a word of French.

Mary had a great task in calming her visitor a little, and sighed with relief when she saw her departing again with her great coach and army of retainers, vowing vengeance on her son-in-law, Lord Sunderland (who she fancied had inspired the King's rebuff), on the King and all his ugly old mistresses, and of course on Walpole most of all. Old Sarah loathed Walpole more than any one, more even than Vanbrugh or Lady Masham (safely retired long since to her country place in Essex). Yet, in spite of all her endless perturbations and wars, if Mary really had any affection for any one in those days, it was for old Sarah, whom she whole-heartedly admired, though it certainly complicated things to have her suddenly descending on London like that, when so many of her bitterest foes, like the Duchess of Montagu and Walpole, were Mary's friends!

Fresh news from the Court. The Prince's children had remained at St. James' Palace when their parents were so ignominiously thrust forth, and from time to time the Princess petitioned the King to be allowed to visit them, which she was allowed, but only in the presence of their governess and never privately. Now one of them fell ill, and of the smallpox. The Princess, summoned by the Turk, Mahomet, in great distress hurried to the Palace. The

Prince sent a most submissive letter to his father, and was sent word that he might come too. He jumped into a chair and was carried there at a trot. The King received him in a very excited state, stamping about the room, and muttering indignantly: *"Votre conduite, votre conduite, sir!"*

That night everybody in the world hurried to Leicester House to congratulate the Prince and his wife; everybody was delighted, though no one knew why, because it was only the most brittle of peaces. Mary was there, of course, squashed in with the rest of them: Mr. Dodington, Philip Stanhope, Miss Bellenden, Mr. Hervey, Mrs. Murray, the idiotic Duchess of Buckingham, the Duke of Grafton, the extraordinary and handsome Duke of Wharton, a sprinkling of soldiers and some of the less austere clergy, not to mention Mrs. Howard and the pages and the bedchamber women, ushers and what-not. The Princess called Lady Mary to stand behind her chair, and spoke with her long and earnestly about the smallpox and its treatment, half-minded to see whether the King would not permit of the inoculation being tried on her other children.

It was that evening Mary first talked at some length with Mrs. Murray, in company with young Mr. Hervey, whom she already knew pretty well by now. Mrs. Murray and Mary struck up a great

friendship on the spot. Granddaughter of the Earl of Marchmont, who had suffered so much in opposing the Stuarts, and daughter of the learned Lady Griseld Baillie (famed for her innumerable virtues), Mrs. Murray was a pretty, shrinking little creature, long separated from her husband, a jealous madman. She was more than ordinarily well educated, like all her family. Mary thought her amusing, and soon the two of them were often seen about together.

Mr. Pope had finally maneuvered the Wortley Montagus now into taking Saville House at Twickenham, and Mary began to enjoy the pleasures of a suburban villa, situated in a neighborhood which was anything but dull. Mr. Pope was far from being the only other human being there—quite apart from the villagers, who, busied with agriculture and handicrafts and herding cattle, did not present to any of the people of fashion the appearance of being human at all.

Philip Stanhope and Mr. Craggs and Mrs. Anastasia Robinson, the opera singer, actually the wife but regarded as the mistress of the valiant Earl of Peterborough, were among her new neighbors. Kew, where the Prince and Princess spent some of their time, and Hampton Court, where the King went often, were near. Walpole was often at Richmond,

giving beagling parties, and hatching successful schemes.

The fine people made a great play of rural delights which gave them a good opportunity for the grand displays they all loved. Gold and crimson cloths were laid on the river's edge, and banquets eaten in the fresh air by a silken throng of maids of honor and attendant nobility, the Prince in their midst, ever ogling some one, and the music of flutes and horns stealing across the water with their laughter and cries. Though Mary did not entertain greatly, since Edward discouraged such wasteful expenditure of good money, she took part in many of the revels; and though she did not herself intrigue in Court politics, derived the greatest satisfaction from noting those who did, and gathering up all the gossip.

In this she was helped by little Mr. Pope, who had really been most obliging through all the tedious business of moving into the new house. He was never too busy to come tripping over to give his advice about the placing of the furniture, to take charge of the laying out of the garden, or to touch up a poem. And he was not slow either at bringing his and other people's poems to her—for things had got to such a pass now, that a poem was voted wretched stuff that Lady Mary did not admire.

A Map of Twickenham

From an engraving in the Print Room of the British Museum, photo by Donald Macbeth, London

But Mary was glad of Pope's company before long.

In the spring of that year, despite the violent protests in the House of Commons by Robert Walpole, Royal assent had been given to a scheme concocted with the best intentions by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Aislabie, with the aid of Lord Sunderland and Earl Stanhope, whereby a chartered company called the South Sea Company, which had in 1711 secured a monopoly of the trading with South America, was to provide the Government with ten million pounds to fund the floating debt, and undertake to buy up the large part of Government annuities. In effect it was to take over the management of the National Debt.

A similar scheme had recently worked so successfully in France that everybody in Paris was rolling in money at that time. Dabbling in stock companies was very popular already, and as it was anticipated that (by some means or other) the profits from the South Sea Company would be enormous (since they were to pay off the enormous debts contracted by the recent war, which dying Marlborough had conducted so successfully) everybody wanted to have shares.

The quotation for a one hundred pound share in the spring was one hundred and thirty pounds; by

July it was pretty steady at one thousand pounds. And in the meantime company promotion blossomed out in England of the most amazing kinds. Every one who could lay hands on a little money threw it into some wild venture: the desire for sudden riches had turned almost every one temporarily insane.

Even Walpole had his fling. Wisely he sold out at a tremendous profit just before the South Sea Company alarmed every one by getting writs issued against certain of the other "bubble" companies of the day. People's confidence wavered for the first time. At least some people's did. South Sea shares fell a little. But Pope wrote to Lady Mary in August:

"MADAM,

"I was made acquainted, late last night, that I might depend upon it as a certain gain to buy the South Sea Stock at the present price, which will certainly rise in some weeks, or less. I can be as sure of this as the nature of any such thing will allow, from the first and best hands, and therefore have despatched the bearer with all speed to you.

"I am sincerely, dear Madam,

"Your most faithful humble servant."

The poet himself had invested all the considerable

profits of his translation of Homer in the Company; Mary had had her little flutter. Noblemen had realized on their family jewels, their land, to buy shares. Huge bribes had been taken by the King's mistresses and by courtiers for the chance to subscribe. And Mary herself, out of an impulse of kindness, had advised poor Monsieur Rémond, the Abbé Conti's friend, who was so poor, and who loved her so distractedly and so hopelessly, to invest, and had actually taken his money herself to dispose of in that way for him.

The bubble, and all its little offspring of lesser bubbles, slowly collapsed. By September the price was seven hundred and seventy pounds; by November it was two hundred and ten pounds. A farce called *The Broken Stock Jobbers* was the success of the town. Thousands of people of all classes were faced with ruin. Men committed suicide every day. The country was in a panic, and such as had the heart to do so laughed over a sheaf of caricatures and ballads on the subject of "Bubbles" with which ingenious artists and versifiers flooded the shops.

Robert Walpole, who had been out of office some while now, Robert Walpole, who had castigated the whole scheme from the very first, honest Robin was summoned hastily to take charge as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Old Craggs committed suicide: young Craggs, the Secretary of State, who had carried Lady Mary so surprisingly into the King's presence, died from grief. Aislabie, who had burned his accounts, was marked for the severest punishment. The Company treasurer fled the country, the Company's books with him. Earl Stanhope died. There were long faces and short tempers everywhere: at card parties, ladies who lost comparatively trifling sums suddenly screamed and went into a dead faint, and their fellow guests would murmur, sympathetically, "The last straw, poor creature; she must have lost thousands . . . she will have to drown herself; her husband will never forgive her if she doesn't."

Lady Mary drew a deep breath: she had made a certain amount in the early days of the "Bubble" and lost a certain amount since, but nothing to break one's heart over. That, she realized, was fortunate, since Edward would have had to be reckoned with had her losses been great and consequently detected by him. She rode to and fro between Twickenham and Covent Garden pretty well pleased with herself, and walked gaily in Mr. Pope's garden with her friends, more cheerful than many. The Duke of Wharton, for instance, said he had lost one hundred and twenty thousand pounds, but he was a careless character, and did not repine too grossly at his

Pope's Villa at Twickenham

From an engraving in the Print Room of the British Museum, photo by Donald Macbeth, London

folly; instead he took dead Cragg's villa at Twickenham, and, whether in Mr. Pope's garden or her own parlor, was often at Lady Mary's side.

Now Mr. Pope's garden was his especial pride. Gardening was all the rage, not the flat formal Dutch gardens which had come in with William III, but something quite new, a sort of landscape gardening which had the excellent intention of improving nature by the introduction of art. His bowling green had been there already, the hot-houses were quite new and rarities at that, trees were planted to form a grove, a shell temple began to go up, and some workmen were had in to dig a tunnel from the back of the garden to the river's edge, passing right under the house. Lord Burlington had given him a classical bust (or as they called it then, busto) which sat gloomily on a little pedestal under an old yew tree. Pope dreamed of importing a temple portico, or a classical ruin, or at the very least a little more statuary, and for a time considered arranging a tall column which would ultimately hold up his ashes in an urn. How the urn was to be put on the column no one knew, and in the end he remembered Westminster Abbey and forgot the urn.

Who were coming across the lawn, walking so close, so leisurely, with such an air of intimacy? A

little child ran before them. Pope peered out. When he realized it was Lady Mary, once again with the Duke of Wharton, as she had been the last time she came over, and the last time he went to Saville House, he felt curiously vexed. He was the man who wanted to stroll across the lawn with her. Of course a Duke, and a very young, reckless, indecent, dashing, brilliant, learned Duke, was entitled to respect. They were obviously discussing Pliny or perhaps Fontenelle (he heard them laughing). Nevertheless little Mr. Pope felt very, very hurt.

He had no words to express his extreme satisfaction of the honor done him by their visit when after an interminable time they at last sauntered up to his door, and came in with little Edward; nor had he found words really suitable when they went away after ten minutes, carrying off three of Mr. Pope's most prized volumes with them. But Mary had not noticed, and the Duke of Wharton would not have thought twice about it if he had. The poet had been polite, and that was all he at the moment asked.

Pope did not see Mary again immediately, since she used to go frequently to visit at Kew, when the Prince's Court was there, because it amused her. The Princess she admired in a way, the Prince struck her as grotesque. He would sit for hours, pointing out the physical perfections or defects of one lady after

another to his poor wife, who bore it all with utter complacency, since she prized his friendship more than his fidelity. At one time he was dangling day-long after Mary Bellenden, jingling a purse of money enticingly every time he came near her, though she affected not to hear. And as this put the poor Prince out very much, he went to Mrs. Howard, his wife's bedchamber woman, for sympathy, and found so much there that before long he needed it no longer since Mrs. Howard had completely won such heart as he had. Mary Bellenden crept out and secretly married her sweetheart, Colonel Campbell; so too her companion maid-of-honor, Mary Lepel, crept out and with equal secrecy married young Mr. Hervey, who was also of the Prince's Court. The Prince forgave them sulkily, and the matches provided fresh gossip.

For long intervals Pope kept himself from seeing Mary again, not even, as a matter of fact, thinking of her, unless she were mentioned by some one.

Mary herself was back in the excitements of the town, thrilled to get her first look at Bononcini—composer, 'cellist and *poseur,* whom Lord Burlington had persuaded over from Rome to help Handel run the new Academy of Music. It was Edward who told Mary that Bononcini had once most notably snubbed the Emperor Joseph. It was at the Duchess

of Montagu's that she first saw him in company with the new *castrato* Senesino. Such sweet music was throbbing through the rooms that the cynical gay company was all in tears, the servants came right into the drawing-room, open-mouthed, to listen, and no one reproved them, while the link-boys and chairmen and street loafers outside struggled and climbed up the windows that they might hear better. The little Duchess of Kingston went into hysterics after the lovely duet was over; half the women present dreamed of Senesino that night (though Mary did not), and music was all the rage from that moment.

Now Mary picked up the town-end of several threads she held: ran to show Edward the new ballad Philip Stanhope had made, on Mr. Hervey and his wife, and was vexed he wouldn't more than glance at it, and was off to Mrs. Murray with it in a moment. It was long. Some verses ran:

"Bright Venus yet never saw bedded
So perfect a beau and a belle,
As when Hervey the handsome was wedded,
To the beautiful Molly Lepel.

"So powerful her charms and so moving,
They would warm an old monk in his cell,
Should the Pope himself ever go roaming,
He would follow dear Molly Lepel.

Senesino the Singer arrives in England. The sweet-voiced and wealthy male soprano is being welcomed by Faustina and Cuzzoni, the female opera singers

From an engraving in the Print Room of the British Museum, photo by Donald Macbeth, London

"Heaven help our good King from a rising,
But that rising who's fitter to quell
Than some lady with beauty surprising,
And who should that be but Lepel?

Then the Princess wanted to see her again for more talk about this grave business of inoculation. It was eventually decided that a number of criminals under sentence of death should be treated in this new manner; if it worked all right with them, the Princess would have her children inoculated. If not—well, the criminals were due to die anyhow, and they would not mind because if they recovered they were to be pardoned. So Maitland, the surgeon, went down to Newgate and ordered a batch of six criminals, jabbed some smallpox pus into them and left it to work.

Early in the new year Lady Mar left London for Paris and settled there with her exiled Jacobite husband, who treated her badly. Mary was a little sad, because she and Frances had become firm friends. However, she still had little Mrs. Murray, there was her dear Duchess of Montagu, the Duke of Wharton, and now Mr. Hervey, for this young bridegroom was often at Mary's house, sometimes with his wife, sometimes not.

The six criminals were reported to be healing up nicely; they had had smallpox and were almost re-

covered. Mary let the Princess know. After awful consultations, grave considerations, and more than a few protestations of horror it was decided that the Royal children should be done too. Mary's little daughter was inoculated at the same time. In a few weeks several people were having their youngsters inoculated. Mary was once more besieged, and suddenly hated the whole thing, vowed she wished she had never heard of, or seen, or brought back with her, so silly a lot of nonsense. But, nevertheless, it was one of the staple topics of conversation for several years more.

Mary shopped and visited and received letters of adulation and wrote poetry, but suddenly everything went wrong. That poor Monsieur Rémond who loved her so desperately and whose money she had unfortunately invested at the wrong moment in the South Sea, suddenly turned into a beastly viper sending her a threatening letter from Paris.

Mary was aghast. As a matter of fact she still had Rémond's money, or rather the five hundred pounds of it that was left. She was not quite sure what it was that Rémond threatened to do, but she knew well enough what he could and might do—tell Edward and tell the world. Edward would think she had been dishonorably concerned in these (and other) money transactions and was capable of any

punishment for that; and both he and the world could quite easily be made to see a great deal more in her relations with Rémond than there had been. A love-affair tainted with money . . . with such a man . . . Mary thought she would die of vexation and shame at the idea. So, her sister, whom she could trust, being in Paris, she wrote to her urgently, explained the whole affair, putting herself very much in the right, even her motives.

"The very post after you left London, I received a letter from him, in which he told me he had discovered my tricks; that he was convinced I had all his money untouched; and he would have it again, or he would print all my letters to him; which though, God knows, very innocent in the main, yet may admit of ill constructions, besides the monstrousness of being exposed in such a manner. I hear from other people that he is liar enough to publish that I have borrowed money of him; though I have a note under his hand, by which he desires me to employ it in the funds. . . .

". . . . I see now that his lies have made me wrong several of my acquaintances, and you among the rest, for having said (as he told me) horrid things against me to him. . . .

". . . I beg your pardon (dear sister) for this

tedious account; but you see how necessary 'tis for me to get my letters from this madman. Perhaps the best way is by fair means; at least they ought to be first tried. . . . ."

A reply to this she asked should be sent in the care of Mrs. Murray. Apparently she could not trust Edward not to open letters to their own house.

She wrote again almost immediately after insisting that no letters from Rémond should be sent to their house, but to Twickenham where she had gone to await events, feeling ill and wretched and more and more alarmed. The "cursed affair," as she terms it, was too much for her altogether. All her closest friends, like Mrs. Murray and Lady Stafford, were told about it, and eventually she sent for Mr. Pope and confided in him. Pope was interested and flattered; he bent all his powers on comforting her, persuaded his old mother to prepare her herb teas and cossets of every edible kind, which were sent over to her house continually. He called on her himself daily, was admitted to her fullest confidence about the whole Rémond affair.

It was largely by his advice that she decided at last to write to Lord Mar—whose emissary and spy Rémond had sometimes been—to exert the most awful influence a powerful noble was capable of to

silence the wretch. By dint of intercepting Rémond's letters to Mr. Wortley Montagu, by her sister's seeing him in Paris, by the persuasion Lord Mar put on him, by refusing to see him when he came to London full of threats, and by getting back from him at last—not without difficulty—her letters in exchange for the money of his which was in her keeping, she did at last succeed in quieting him, and he vanished from her world for ever. But it was a long time before she felt secure against him; and Mr. Pope did her many services through all that time. Indeed, it often struck her as absurd that so low a person—for to her he was ignoble save that his wit had raised him—should be one in whom she confided so much.

But he was as elated as ever at knowing her, and addressed the most exquisitely flattering poems to her—and hastened to do her any service he could. Often he did not see her for an interval—especially if Dean Swift, whom she hated, were with him, or many of her own friends, who despised him, were about her. But Edward, when he was in London, always welcomed Pope, even at times when Lady Mary could well have spared the presence of the strange, ugly, sickly, little man.

CHAPTER IX

CHILL WINDS

Life at Twickenham began to take on a most delightful aspect for Mary. She hurried there as often as she could, lingered there longer than she intended. It was such an agreeable neighborhood, full of pretty villas enlivened by friends of hers. When they were not verse-writing, or attending one another's entertainments, they were following the fashionable pursuit of landscape-gardening, or riding, or performing on musical instruments in concert, or getting up gorgeously costumed amateur performances of plays.

They were all very proud of Twickenham. Where else in the world was it possible to see a Chinese pagoda and a tiny hill of red cedars in one garden, a summer-house made of mirrors in the next, an alcove of shells with a rill dripping into a marble basin in a third? Every visitor felt that there had never been a place so uniformly and so choicely rustic. Secretary Johnston had the most varied collection of fruit trees in the kingdom. He constructed

small terraces for his vines and every year pressed out a few hogsheads of wine, which he swore was as good as the French or Italian. Mrs. Howard, one of the latest arrivals, was building a tunnel like Pope's and a cottage full of the chaney porcelain that was so sought after. Travelers and antiquaries made pilgrimages down the river and worshiped in the groves of Twickenham.

Her anxiety about Rémond partly relieved, Mary set about that business of enjoyment she had, after her return from Turkey, resolved upon. She allowed herself to be interrupted only by pressing inquiries about the inoculation that continually poured in upon her. It seemed as if all the children in England were being engrafted, and that she must pat each one on the head.

On Sundays she received company for tea. Lord Peterborough, eccentric, soldier, traveler (he had even been to Pennsylvania out of curiosity to see the new settlement), brought with him regularly his lady fair, Anastasia Robinson, the singer, and sometimes Senesino the *castrato*—famed already even more for the strange adoration women paid him than for the sweet sadness of his mezzo-soprano and the elegance of his "shake." Mrs. Murray would come, Lady Oxford (not her husband, for he was shut up with his collection of manuscripts), Lady

Stafford with her nimble tongue, Mr. Congreve with his lady the young Duchess of Marlborough, and the Herveys were constant visitors. Mr. Cibber would sometimes bring his musical children; old Kneller, who had finished his portrait of Mary (it did not please her greatly), and the learned Richardson, who was painting an elegant picture of her, were others prized for their accomplishments whom she elected to gather round her. Philip Stanhope, now Lord Chesterfield, came seldom because Mary would not receive "Con" Phillips, the excessively scandalous woman he was then keeping. And the old Duchess of Marlborough never came to the general assemblies, for she had too many enemies there, Lord Peterborough not least among them. She, in any case, was in mourning for her husband, the martial Duke, who after years of mortal illness had recently died.

After the guests had departed (and on their way usually looked in upon Pope, not for his own sake so much as to see his rare weeping willow, the second in all England) Lady Mary with her close friends Lady Stafford, Mrs. Murray, and Miss Skerrett would settle down to a quiet gossip over supper, until either Hervey joined them, or Robert Walpole came to carry his love, Miss Skerrett, off to their joint residence in Richmond Park, and the other ladies

threw on their hooded sacks and felt their way through the garden to their coaches waiting in the dark road.

Too soon Mrs. Murray absented herself, and for a reason that was vexing. Mrs. Murray had an unpleasant adventure which was talked about to the exclusion of all other news for a time. A footman of her brother burst into her room one night, addressed her passionately, and at pistol point demanded her favors. The man, by name Arthur Grey, was drunk, and Mrs. Murray managed to disarm him and, by screaming, call her servants and family to the rescue.

Some while after, Lady Mary wrote a ballad upon the occasion which was privately circulated among her laughing friends. It was greatly admired and often repeated. Unfortunately, another and much warmer ballad upon the same subject had also been written by a hand unknown, and printed under the title "Virtue in Danger." It was offensive to Mrs. Murray, for it insinuated that she would not have screamed if she had thought the servants would be so prompt. Then a well-meaning relative suggested that the second ballad had been written by Lady Mary. At first Mrs. Murray did not believe it, unbridled though she knew her friend's pen to be. But gradually hearing from others that Lady Mary

certainly had written a ballad (though not that one), she slowly began to entertain a dislike which developed into black hatred before long. If they met at any private house, or the opera, Mrs. Murray would rush up and abuse Mary like a pickpocket, heap her with unpleasant adjectives and nouns and make quite a stir.

Quarrels were common enough in those circles; Lady Mary was in an impregnable position, and she affected to laugh Mrs. Murray's tempers away. But before many years had passed, the story about the ballad had been told and retold with so many variations that it made, in the mouths of Mary's enemies, a nasty weapon. She was too successful and too much admired not to be envied by a great many; she was too clever not to be feared. And if she was writing some of the many malicious ballads of the day, then, people thought, she was positively dangerous.

The rupture with Mrs. Murray also ended Mary's never very warm friendship with Mrs. (now Lady) Hervey, closest companion of Mrs. Murray. That did not, however, alter Mary's growing attachment for Lord Hervey, whom she was seeing often.

While she was in town from late autumn to late spring every year, he became one of her chiefest visitors and took up an especial place in her life.

John, Lord Hervey

Painted by Van Loo, from the National Portrait Gallery, London

Though she went everywhere, saw every one, and was regarded as the reigning star, Mary had few intimate friends. For one thing she was too busy; for another, too formidable in spite of her gaiety. Perhaps both men and women realized that she found the greatest difficulty in respecting any one. Those who were clever were either dishonest or ridiculous in her eyes. Those who were stupid, with few exceptions, made her impatient. But Hervey was different.

Like her, he combined a positive certainty of his own absolute superiority with a great naturalness and simplicity of heart. Like her, he cared for no one. In his company she felt as she did with no other man, perfectly at home. He would, she knew, never be impertinent, never exceed the level of acquaintance on which she chose that they should meet. In him there resided some subtle quality she never attempted to define, but appreciated: a sort of elaborate detachment, of grace, of pride. In his presence she felt at her best; she came to care for him deeply, without passion but with sensibility.

Confidences in the ordinary way she reserved for her sister Frances. But confidences of her opinions, of her soul, she made to Hervey, that *âme bien-née,* whose personal good looks appealed to her and whose affectations she understood.

He would accompany her shopping and make the choice of a trinket seem an imperial occupation. He who painted his own face advised her on the painting of hers. He by her side at the opera made of the music an intellectual feast for two unmoved critics. He it was who bade her, on an impulse, command a dress of brown silk trimmed with silver like that which the ungainly nightingale, Cuzzoni, wore; and when she did so, smiled with her to see half the ladies begin wearing that subtle combination of colors in imitation of her who had been bold enough to imitate a common singer. He it was who brought her a living description of the death of Jack Sheppard. With him a year or two later she read the manuscript of a play which her young cousin, the General's son, Henry Fielding, had sent her, pleading for an opinion upon it; and with him, followed by all the world, she attended the first night of the same play, which had been dedicated to her, and was glad to know Hervey thought *Love in Several Masques* showed a masterhand, praising especially the passage in which the widow and Vermilia ridicule the suitors, each more absurd than the last, who dangle after the ladies. For this passage Fielding had elaborated at Lady Mary's suggestion, and the suitors were living portraits of some who dangled after her.

Her acquaintance with Hervey was one of the chief themes of her life for years. But when she wrote, as she did regularly, to her sister Frances settled in Paris, she hardly mentioned him. She confided much in Frances but not her need of Hervey. It was one of the few things in all her life which she took seriously.

To Frances she retailed the news of the town in her own, peculiar glancing style.

Mr. Pope, whom she had cold-shouldered lately, she reported

"has made a subterranean grotto, which he has furnished with looking-glass, and they tell me it has a very good effect,"

and enclosed a poem (which must not be shown to any one) written by nice, simple Mr. Gay, in which Pope was depicted as bleeding to death like a struck deer because his house was abandoned by her whose presence alone brought joy:

> "Joy lives not here: to happier seats it flies,
> And only dwells where Wortley casts her eyes."

Frances would smile when she read that. She had always laughed, as pretty nearly every one did, at Pope's furious pretense of admiration for Mary.

Subsequent letters she sprinkled with tit-bits about the follies of men and women they both knew —like Mr. Pulteney, so unconcerned at a wife openly kept by another man, Lord Gage divorcing his wife for a yachting party with rakish Lord Hillsborough, the young Duchess of Marlborough's miscarriage, or the beating which Lord Peterborough had given Senesino for an impertinence to Mrs. Robinson. She added now a request for a ready-made nightgown, now for stuffs, and threw in here and there one of her own inimitable, clear generalizations about the way of the world:

"Poets increase and multiply to that stupendous degree, you see them at every turn, even in embroidered coats and pink-colored top-knots; making verses is almost as common as taking snuff, and God can tell what miserable stuff people carry about in their pockets, and offer to all their acquaintance, and you know one cannot refuse reading and taking a pinch."

She did not say, but Frances guessed, that every poet wanted to gain Lady Mary's approval for his poetical efforts.

The life about Mary is fast and furious. A woman who is talked of for only two lovers is con-

sidered a prude. A wit has suggested that an Act of Parliament should be introduced for removing the word "not" from the Ten Commandments, whereupon another wit has objected that if this were done, the contrariness of human nature would turn every one virtuous again. As Mary says:

"The appellation of rake is as genteel in a woman as a man of quality; it is no scandal to say Miss—— the maid of honor looks very well now she is up again, and poor Biddy Noel has never been quite well since her last flux. You may imagine we married women look very silly; we have nothing to excuse ourselves, but that it was done a great while ago, and we were very young when we did it."

And she did not exaggerate. Lady Mary was now—besides her activities in other circles and at home—in the thick of the Prince of Wales' court, where pleasure-making occupied every moment of the day not given over to inventing annoyances for the King's party. Older than many of the very young ladies of the Leicester House group (and a scandalous lot of young ladies some of them were), she was more admired than any. It was not that she was more learned, for she disdained to make a display of her classical and literary accomplishments:

but she had a conquering manner. The Prince himself, when stag-hunting in Richmond Park, pulled his horse close to hers, and on the way home jogged side by side with her over the turf, muttering foolish and heavy compliments in her ear, at which she laughed and looked arch but made no response. She despised this pompous Prince who confided all his amorous adventures to his wife, and was quite content to consign him to the keeping of quiet clinging Mrs. Howard.

Yet if the Prince was rather absurd, his entourage was entertaining: all the clever people of the younger generation gathered around him, with Dean Swift and Pope pressing close at their heels, all in hopes of reward when the Prince should be King. Mary, who wanted nothing, observed and smiled.

The peregrinations of a new figure that just then entered her world caught Mary's eye. This was a Monsieur Voltaire, over from Paris, and under the protection of Lord Peterborough, who loved a cynic even better than the Princess of Wales did. This wise, dry little Frenchman got himself presented at Court, snubbed Congreve, paid the most fulsome compliments to Lady Hervey, for whom he composed a pretty poem in excellent English, turned up at Newmarket races, conversed with Quakers for an

article he was writing, peered into everything, asked endless questions, was always noting things down, and congregated with the learned members of the Royal Society.

One day he would be seen chatting apart with Walpole; the next he turned up at Twickenham and spent hours with Pope, skipped across later to dine with Lord Bolingbroke (who was anathema to Lady Mary). Hervey told her in confidence that Monsieur Voltaire was a paid spy of Walpole on Bolingbroke and his good servant Pope, which was the reason Voltaire courted Lady Bolingbroke.

Lady Mary, learning then that her old friend Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, had engaged the talented Frenchman to write a memoir of her great husband, the dead Duke, warned old Sarah to have a care. And in the end, because of the Duchess's caution of him and because he would not write as she wished, he was dismissed from the task and Henry Fielding chosen instead. Old Sarah could not bear to be crossed, and the meager little Frenchman had far too many ideas of his own. Her rage with him grew daily. At last she rose from her great armchair and pushed him out of the house, hurling his hat and his cane after him. "I thought you was a man of sense," she shouted, "but I find you are either a fool or a philosopher."

In the middle of her gay activities, Mary was summoned to her father's deathbed. She found the house at Arlington Street full of relations, all bickering with one another. The little Duchess was in tears but firmly insisting on being mistress of the house. Old Aunt Cheyne scolded every one; Mary's orphaned nephew and niece squabbled in a corner, and Lady Gower began a long harangue about the division of the property as it had been arranged in her father's will and as she thought it ought to have been arranged. The guardianship of the orphan heir to the dukedom was the center of contention. Matters grew worse when a servant came down to say that his Grace wished to speak to Lady Mary. Her stepmother sprang up, said she would not hear of it, he was too ill. Mary, looking calm and unmoved, was torn between dismay and anger. Her father died without seeing her. She found he had left her six thousand pounds.

When she went later as in duty bound to pay her respects to the widow after the funeral it was with a sore heart. The house, which she vowed she would never after this enter again, was draped throughout in black, the bedroom in darkness save for one candle, the bed all black, the little Dowager Duchess in her heavy mourning sitting up in bed and looking palely at her many solemn, black-clad visitors. It

struck Mary as vilely ridiculous and hateful. In the eyes of her stepmother she thought she detected a gleam of triumph, perhaps at the thought that her stepdaughters had not inherited more.

This family calamity, which gave rise to endless meetings and discussions with relatives, was hardly over when Mary was thrown into a fever by the news that her son Edward had run away from Westminster school. He, while charming, had grown to be a bad wild boy. Found at last at Oxford and dragged home, his indifference to chastisement horrified even his father, the cold Edward. Mary herself was gravely dismayed.

She had hardly returned to her normal life when the sudden death of her sister, Lady Gower, created more strife, more family quarrels, on top of which Mary's son ran away from school again, not to be traced so easily this time. London was scoured, handbills were issued, advertisements printed in the journals. It was months before he was discovered at Blackwall, apprenticed to a fisherman whose wares he had sold as competently as though born to the trade. He was haled back to Covent Garden, thrashed by Edward until he could hardly stand, while his mother stood looking on with an expressionless face. She felt a little afraid of him, and very disgusted.

She was so harassed with personal anxieties that the death of George I hardly concerned her. Her acquaintances in the Prince's circle were in seventh heaven, intrigues of the most complex kind were going on all round. But old Mr. Sidney Montagu elected to die too, and Mary accompanied Edward to Yorkshire to attend to the funeral, to his very considerable inheritance, and to all the business consequent upon a death in a wealthy family. Disdainfully, she visited the coal-mines that Edward now inherited.

They returned to London just in time for the Coronation in October. To every one's surprise, Robert Walpole had not merely remained in power, but stood higher and firmer than ever; Hervey too had profited by the accession of George II, whose wife liked him as much as she did Walpole. Mary barely had time to prepare to plunge once more into life when news came from Paris that her sister, Lady Mar, had gone mad.

The invalid was brought secretly back to England and hurried off north by Lord Grange, her brother-in-law, a ferocious person who had already imprisoned his own wife on lonely St. Kilda. Mary was frantic, summoned Hervey, who hurried to Walpole, who promised to help and suggested a plan. Riders went galloping in pursuit of Lord Grange,

caught him, and in the name of the law bade him deliver over the person of Frances, Countess of Mar, to them. The poor, sick, frightened madwoman was brought slowly back, and put under the care of her sister, Lady Mary.

Young Edward Wortley Montagu ran away for the third time, and disappeared completely. His father said he wished no better than to hear he was dead. Mary kept much more to her home now, for Lady Mar needed constant attention, would not eat, and sat wringing her hands and moaning by the hour. She saw no one except Miss Skerrett, the Duchess of Montagu, and as often as possible her very dear Lord Hervey, whose presence she fancied Mr. Wortley Montagu suffered rather than approved.

So many deaths and family misfortunes had come her way in the past two years she had begun to believe that an ill star ruled over her destiny. Even in the happiest days of Twickenham she had sometimes shuddered and experienced a sudden and uncontrollable sensation of boding evil. The entries in her diary had not all been frivolous ones, and in the letters she had written so regularly to her sister Frances until her illness, a wistful, or sometimes even a tragic note sounded. Mary at her happiest

was not truly happy. She thought of herself and spoke of herself as "one of the condemned," growing convinced that human life was a punishment. Her light-hearted desire for gaiety had for some little while given way to soberness, more pensiveness. She expected now, all her family troubles over, to settle down to an agreeable but much calmer life.

She reckoned in vain. Little Mr. Pope, whom she had not seen for a long time, whom she had utterly forgotten, suddenly came to life again in the most unexpected and most unpleasant way imaginable.

CHAPTER X

THE WASP OF TWICKENHAM

Mischief had been brewing in Twickenham unknown to Lady Mary. She was aware, of course, that Pope pouted when he could not see her often, or see her alone; and that, though he dared not be so presuming as to say so, he very much wanted to be her chief *literary* friend and to earn the privilege of mending her verse and running her errands. He had frowned and sulked every time he saw her with the Duke of Wharton, and left off coming to see her after a certain day when he was announced as she sat alone with Lord Hervey.

A spell of that intimate and peculiar nature which she enjoyed with Hervey was on them both so strongly that she could not, would not break it to attend to Mr. Pope. He sat neglected in a distant corner of the room, while she continued a conversation in which he had no part with the pale elegant courtier sitting close to her.

When Pope had done her favors he wanted to be thanked a thousand times. If she asked to borrow a

harpsichord, for example, he made it very difficult, said the instrument did not belong to him but to his landlord, that she and her friends could come over and use it at his house, that he would try to get permission to let her have it, and so forth.

If visitors descended suddenly upon her, and she sent a servant to borrow some bed-linen, he let her know that his mother had risen from a sick-bed to make a careful darn in one of the sheets, and sent officiously to fetch the sheets back afterward, in order, he said, to save her pains. At the same time he grumbled fearfully to his mother that her servant had handed back the soiled sheets to him instead of having them washed first. And when months elapsed without his being able to see Lady Mary at all, he told several other people about the dirty sheets, too.

Pope seriously believed that he filled an especial niche in Lady Mary's life; it took him a long time to realize he had been gradually thrust out of it. When he could no longer persuade himself that he was "always" seeing her, he experienced unpleasant pangs of rage, disappointment and jealousy. For to know Mary was a distinction. To have known her and to know her no longer was in some quarters quite a disgrace.

Petulant thoughts of her, of her husband and

friends, ran in his mind and hardened to revengeful ones.

Hearing she was at Saville House again—at about the time her son had run away for the third time—he made his way there and sent in a message so pressing that she could not bring herself to deny seeing him, little disposed as she was to do so.

He came in with an air of reluctance, made his compliments moodily, sat with a sorrowful air. Then he began to express his grief at not seeing her; then his feelings (which arose out of rather than inspired his words) ran higher and higher and the astonished Mary realized that little Mr. Pope was making her a declaration. He even went down on his knees and scrabbled at her skirts and wept. It was a horrible spectacle.

Mary herself was in an overwrought frame of mind. She felt inclined to be hysterical herself, but realized that dignity was necessary and in the effort to be dignified broke into a peal of laughter which nothing could check. Mr. Pope sprang to his feet, looking as though he were going to spit at her, then darted from the room, and went tripping and stumbling, blind and breathless with humiliation, through the garden toward home. Worst of all, as he went out, he saw Lord Hervey coming in. He imagined that both of them would laugh at him to-

gether, and kiss each other—yes, he was sure they would kiss. . . .

He rushed into his home and threw himself on to his bed, refused food, went pale and red. Horrible thoughts came into his mind.

But soon he grew calmer. His littleness, his humility fell away. The power of the pen was his, and he would scourge that haughty peeress for whom he had done so much and who had been so horribly ungrateful.

And so when his *Capon's Tale* appeared in the next of the Miscellanies to which Swift and Pope contributed, he had slipped in some fairly obscure couplets about a hen that hatched more chickens than she could manage properly, a hen

> "With eyes so piercing yet so pleasant
> You would have sworn this hen a pheasant."

and ended up by advising this prolific hen, instead of letting her offspring be farmed out and passed for the work of others, to be more honest:

> "Such, Lady Mary, are your tricks:
> But since you hatch, pray own your chicks."

He was giving her just a little preliminary rap on the knuckles about Mrs. Murray and the naughty

ballad, in fact. By this time Mary had been generally credited with the authorship of many poems and ballads she knew nothing about. It made life a little complex for her, but had not disturbed her seriously.

Only a short while later, Pope, whose vengeance was slow, included another couplet in his famous *Dunciad,* the idea for which he and Mary had often discussed in company. Now he made use of her six-year-old confidences about Rémond:

> "When hapless Monsieur much complains at Paris
> Of wrongs from Duchesses and Lady Maries,"

and added a foot-note to the second edition.

"This passage was thought to allude to a famous lady who cheated a French wit of £5,000 in the South Sea year. But the author meant it generally of all bragging travelers, and of all whores and cheats under the name of ladies."

Every one in Mary's world immediately recognized the hit. Most of them were amused; some of them were secretly glad; only a few were vexed with Pope. Mary had enjoyed the blaze of popularity, success and good fortune too long not to have ac-

quired more than a few enemies, most of whom her own tongue, her unruffled pride, her inability to adapt herself to any other standards than her own had made for her. These doted on the foot-note, showed it to one another. Even Mary's best friends had to smile.

And Pope, a very frail and in some ways contemptible little vessel shaken to bits by the great talent that inhabited it, crouched and wrote on in Twickenham, sharpening his pen anew.

The more he thought things over, the more sure he was that Mary had always sneered at him behind his back. He began to recall more than a few stinging poems that had appeared during the last eight years, aiming blows at him. He fancied Mary had written all of them, he was positive she had written some; he even fancied he could recall that she had been much with Wharton before the one appeared, much with Hervey before another. Those aristocratic, diseased lovers of hers (and he was sure now they were her lovers, though he had not thought so before) had helped her write them.

The fact that Pope was out for Mary's blood was not generally realized for some time. The world as a whole, besides enjoying a malicious sally at her, had a normal esteem for one whose husband had just inherited riches to an extent unknown but consid-

erable, who herself was conspicuous and brilliant in the most fashionable circles, who had so many highly-placed relatives and friends, and who was so clever and so grandly mannered. It even sympathized superficially with a great lady who had recently lost so many members of her family, who was encumbered with the care of a mad sister, fretted by the absence of a truant son. And it knew too that Pope had been admitted to her circle; people did not realize at once that he had been banished. Yet the fact that he had been of her acquaintance, had lived so near to her, made his personal attacks eventually much more credible. For every one felt that, after all, he must *know*.

In the meantime Mary's wandering son was once more discovered and brought back home. This time he had managed to get as far as Portugal, had lived there working in vineyards, haunting wharfsides for a couple of years. A strict tutor was chosen for him; Edward, besides thrashing him again cruelly, also tried talking to him. After all, he was now a grown lad of seventeen, intelligent too in spite of his wildness. His tutor was bidden to take him on a trip to the West Indies and bring him home again when he seemed tractable. Edward and Mary saw him go without a qualm; they had begun to be rather frightened, in their cold proud way, of this dis-

graceful son of theirs. And when Hervey told Mary that Walpole had let him know, in deepest secrecy, that it had been suggested to the King that the best thing to do with the Prince of Wales was to ship him off to America and leave him in some wild and desert tract there to wander and perish, it did pass through Mary's mind that perhaps such a fate, which King George shrank from decreeing for his son, was one which had much to recommend itself as regards her son Edward.

But when the boy had gone Mary felt shaken. Too much that was disagreeable had come her way those past four or five years. She had a presentiment of evil, and fell dangerously ill, languishing for weeks.

Her dear Hervey came to her rescue, brought her news, books, intellectual and emotional comfort. Edward, her now elderly husband, merely saw to it that she had adequate medical treatment, and packed her off to Bath to recover her health.

But Pope had been busy in the meantime. In almost every poem he published now there was a more or less veiled allusion to her. Now it was her passion for auctions and raffles, her friendship with Miss Skerrett (that notoriously kept woman, Walpole's mistress), and now it was a revelation of the secrets of her toilet . . . her unsavory toilet. . . .

There was one thing to trouble Pope and make him fear that Mary might have the last word yet. Long before the quarrel, he had written to her, comparing her with Sappho and affirming that she had no less talent in verse. Sappho had become his pet name for her. Every one had heard it from his lips. He was at a loss now to know how he could retract a comparison so recklessly made. It agitated him to think that Mary, if she chose, could bring out his letter, show it to her friends, and laugh with them at his sudden change of face. He knew she was capable of explaining how it had come about, of describing his passionate declaration and his rebuff. She could plausibly argue that all his venom was due to disappointed love.

But once, in the late hours of the night, when he was suffering as usual from the shattering succession of thoughts and images that filled his head and drove sleep away, he sat up in bed with a sudden gasp and grin of joy. Suppose he continued to call her Sappho. Suppose he fastened the nickname to her as firmly as he could—made it hers for ever. He saw what a new complexion affairs would bear. People who remembered the name from old days would think that he had always used it ironically. And moreover—here was the prettiest circumstance—there were associations to the name which

made it as convenient a handle for satire as for praise. He could use the name so that Lady Mary would never dare to show his old indiscreet letter; or, if she should show it, then the laugh would be against her.

He thought, too, of a vast esoteric joke, which only he and his closest friends should enjoy. He would throw in Lord Hervey as Phaon, remembering his own translation from Ovid of Sappho's shameless pursuit of her wearied lover. These were his lines:

"I burn, I burn, as when through ripen'd corn
By driving winds the spreading flames are borne . . . .
Soft scenes of solitude no more can please;
Love enters there, and I'm my own disease.
No more the Lesbian dames my passion move,
Once the dear objects of my guilty love;
All other loves are lost in only thine,
Ah, youth ungrateful to a flame like mine!"

But the joke should be kept from uninstructed readers. Instead of Phaon, Fanny. Hervey was pale, painted and womanish, and the name would stick to him all his days. Yes, it should be Sappho and Lord Fanny.

He began his new scheme with an unforgivable couplet in the *Imitation of the First Satire of the Second Book of Horace:*

"Who 'er offends, at some unlucky time
Slides into verse, and hitches into rhyme,
Sacred to ridicule his whole life long,
And the sad burden of some merry song.
Slander or poison dread from Delia's rage:
Hard words or hanging if your judge is Page.
From furious Sappho scarce a milder fate,
Pox'd by her love, or libell'd by her hate."

The same poem contained a reference to Hervey as Lord Fanny. He had not dared to hope that Mary and Hervey would acknowledge the references; but Mary was unwise enough to let the world know how indignant she was. It had been bad enough when he referred to "linen worth Lady Mary's." This was beyond bearing. Thrown into an ungovernable fury, she called Hervey to her side and commanded him to aid her in a counter-attack.

They selected the same weapon as their opponent, absolutely unscrupulous satire, and gave it to the world as the work of "A Lady" in the spring of 1733. The verses were addressed to the author of the *Imitation of Horace,* who is compared to his original in these lines:

"Horace can laugh, is delicate, is clear,
You only coarsely rail, or darkly sneer;
His style is elegant, his diction pure,
Whilst none thy crabbed numbers can endure;
Hard as thy heart, and as thy birth obscure."

They knew that Pope was touchy upon two things more than all else—he was deformed and he was, socially speaking, a nobody, and their sense of outrage was so great that they used their bludgeons without scruple:

"Thine is just such an image of *his* pen
As thou thyself art of the sons of men,
Where our own species in burlesque we trace,
A sign-post likeness of the human race
That is at once resemblance and disgrace."

They suggested that even readers who admired his talent, as they grew more acquainted with the nastiness of his nature, would no more open their eyes to his books "than to thy person they would do their door."

"If none with vengeance yet thy crimes pursue
Or give thy manifold affronts their due;
If limbs unbroken, skin without a stain,
Unwhipt, unblanketed, unkick'd, unslain,
That wretched little carcase you retain,
The reason is, not that the world wants eyes,
But thou'rt so mean, they see, and they despise."

And so to their climax:

"Then whilst with coward hand you stab a name
And try at least t'assassinate our fame,
Like the first bold assassin's be thy lot,

Ne'er be thy guilt forgiven or forgot;
But as thou hat'st, be hated by mankind,
And with the emblem of thy crooked mind
Marked on thy back, like Cain, by God's own hand,
Wander like him, accursed through the land."

Both Hervey and Lady Mary believed quite firmly that this poem would once and for all annihilate, utterly discredit, and silence Pope. They had underestimated him entirely in hating him.

Though insults always threw the little man into such a rage that he sat and cried with vexation, they acted at the same time as a stimulus to his genius. He was like a boxer who never wakes up fully till he is hit, and then is filled with a fury of aggression. Mary had taken exactly the step which would bring down on her head all the mountain of his magnificent spite.

He included references to Mr. Wortley Montagu's avarice, to his coal-mines, in one poem, branding him with the names Shylock, Avidien, Worldly, Gripus. He described the ménage of the Wortley Montagus, their poor table, their passion for saving or making money, and passed to their wild son and heir, then again to Lady Mary's underlinen. Once more he set himself to make the name of Sappho a by-word, with all the coarseness of which he was capable:

"Yes; thank my stars! as early as I knew
This town, I had the sense to hate it too;
Yet here, as e'en in hell, there must be still
One giant vice, so excellently ill
That all beside one pities, not abhors:
As who knows Sappho, smiles at other whores."

Mary now began hiring Grub Street hack-writers to wield their pens against Pope; he retaliated in kind and much more acutely. He wrote the neatest and unkindest description by one man of another for the benefit of Lord Hervey, with pointed references to his ill-health, to his painted cheeks, to his vegetarian diet. He revived the scandal of Rémond, and threw in an accusation against Mary of maltreating her poor mad sister, Lady Mar:

"And at a peer or peeress shall I fret
Who starves a sister, or forswears a debt?"

Pope began to find he had some warm friends in this paper warfare with the couple so far above his own rank. Many found courage, for the first time, to envy and dislike Lady Mary, though before they had only wondered and admired. There had so far been no serious defections, save Mrs. Murray's, from her circle; for it would have been thought ignominious not to profess to admire her. But now several became conscious that Lady Mary's airs were

intolerable. When Pope had given the lead, they even dared to speak ill of her and behave indifferently toward her; they were far less afraid of seeming unfashionable.

And by dint of repetition, Pope's couplets began to be accepted as truth. Mary's position was vulnerable enough, if once a cloud of suspicion were thrown over her. While she was at her acme of fame, it was thought quite natural that there should be a crowd of men attending at her heels, and that she should be seen here with one of them, somewhere else with another. She was clever and a beauty, and all the great ladies of her time were surrounded by a little train of admirers. Yet, if any one chose to speak ill-naturedly of her, it was easy to believe the worst. There was such a small border-line in the eighteenth century between sentimental attachment, playful devotion, and dissolute habits, open rakishness. Generally a woman was judged less by her acts than by the general interpretation put upon them. And when a reputation began to decay there was no way to end the process except by retiring to a nunnery; and even that would have seemed to show that detractions had been justified.

So Pope's abuse found ready ears; and Mary, who had believed him incapable of doing serious harm, found that he could make life unpleasant for her.

Do what she would in the way of reprisals, she could not keep pace with the ingenious slanders put about by him whom she so aptly named "the wicked wasp of Twickenham." He revived, in conversation now, the forgotten rumor of her affair with the Sultan, and added an immense amount of circumstantial detail. He coupled her name with a score of young rakes and old debauchees. He mentioned things he swore he had seen with his own eyes; and generally had the ingenuity to add a grain of truth to everything he alleged. Even taciturn Edward looked at Mary sourly from time to time now, and told her she was most unwise to have given the rascal so much of her confidence.

Only her own few intimate friends remained on her side in the battle of abuse, except bold spirits among women who, without knowing her, revered her from afar as the patroness and inspiration of female emancipation, and the general people who, much to her dismay and amusement, insisted on considering her as a benefactor and physician because of her inoculation fad. With them her reputation was safe.

Otherwise, Pope had it all his way. Even Lord Peterborough proved himself not very much of a friend (but then she had spoken slightingly of Anastasia Robinson) when Mary wrote to him and

begged him to ask Pope what she had done to merit the lines about Sappho, of which by now the whole town knew the implication. Lord Peterborough, in evident collaboration with Pope, sent her the most courteously disobliging letter a woman could fear to receive. Mr. Pope, according to Lord Peterborough, "wondered how the town could apply those lines to any but some noted common woman; that he should be yet more surprised if you should take them to yourself. He named to me four remarkable poetesses and scribblers, Mrs. Centlivre, Mrs. Heywood, Mrs. Manley, and Mrs. Ben, ladies famous indeed in their generation, and some of them esteemed to have given very unfortunate favours to their friends, assuring me that such only were the objects of his satire.

"I hope this assurance will prevent your further mistake, and any consequence upon so odd a subject. I have nothing more to add."

This letter stabbed Mary to the heart. It temporarily broke her faith in herself, in the world. She had always suspected that destiny had had an especially malevolent eye fixed on her, and now she had the proof of it. Even Hervey could do nothing for her. He came over from the Palace as often as ever he could, ate with her, talked to her as of old with

his unfailing genius for divining her mood, her thoughts. But no spark could ignite her spirits; she could make him little or no response. Her sole exertion was in favor of poor Lady Mar, whose insanity had never lifted, though she was generally quiet and good, but weeping often and saying over and over, to nobody in particular: "He ought to be flogged, he ought to be flogged." And Mary, who also knew somebody who ought to be flogged, sat with her, patted her knee, bade her eat and drink at meal-times, and drove her out in a curtained coach. Only when Lady Mar's daughter, now grown up, demanded the custody of her mother, did she relinquish this charge, and even then unwillingly and with misgivings, because Edward advised her so.

And so she was free again. But then she was not so young, and worse than that, she felt that she had been brought low in people's eyes. When she attended the Court or the theater as of old, though she was as witty as ever and as gay, she fancied she was aware of whispers and glances not of the usual admiration, but of scorn or curiosity. Men glanced at her now, but differently or she fancied it. Queen Caroline was cold to her, although so fond of Hervey; George II was not only coarse, but indecent. When Mary returned home from an evening of gaiety, she felt flat and stale, her heart ached.

Now to her further vexation her daughter, grown up already, and usually so charming and simple and obedient, proposed to marry herself to an admirer without any particular means or prospects, the young Earl of Bute. Lady Mary shrugged him away as impossible. But Lord Bute went to Mr. Wortley Montagu nevertheless, who called in his wife, who brought in her daughter and would have chided them both for ridiculous children. But her daughter reminded her, sweetly and courteously dutiful, of a certain runaway marriage from the Acton house of her grandfather the late Duke of Kingston. Lady Mary and Edward exchanged a glance, and the ladies withdrew. What happened between Edward and Lord Bute was never told, but he went away with a long face. Mary's daughter took the first opportunity of following him secretly, and there was another runaway marriage.

Now Lady Mary and Edward had an unusually long conversation with each other. They had grown strangers under the same roof these many years, but Edward wished to say several things to his wife. He forbade her ever to tell her daughter (who had been slightly but disapprovingly forgiven for running away), but he had decided, he said, to make her his heir. Their son Edward he positively knew, by all the signs he had already given, was never likely to

attain wisdom or discretion. To Lady Mary he proposed a sufficient settlement . . . provision when he died. Here he paused and hesitated a little, raked at his wig. For himself, he continued, he had his duties to his country, he had cares and responsibilities in his hands. He had been vexed more than once lately by certain libels and rumors that had come to his ears concerning Lady Mary. He would be glad if there were no more brawling on paper, on her side, glad if she would avoid scandalous occasions.

Lady Mary understood. She made no reply.

But when she had assured herself that her sister Mar was as comfortably settled with her daughter as circumstances would permit, when she had at length reviewed her own life and what it had brought her, what it still had to offer, she had very little gaiety in her heart. Her father . . . had never loved her. Edward had proved worse than the worst his courting letters ought to have revealed him to her. Her son—she made a gesture of disgust to herself, and sat and stared before her, turning things over sourly in her mind. She resolved to leave England.

Smiling and proud as ever she went now and then to visit a friend, used her tongue as nimbly as ever, appeared now and then at the playhouse, walked

now and then in the Park, gave out that she was sailing, told one acquaintance, now another, that she had been ordered a change of scene, and paid a few last visits without saying any serious farewells.

Almost the last of her dearest friends she saw was the old Duchess of Marlborough, the marks of the grave already on her. Mary sat down in a low chair by the bedside and said little. Old Sarah fell to talking about her dead husband, told Mary how once, to anger him, she had rashly cut off the long golden hair that had been his especial joy, laid it, all its long length, on a chair in the ante-chamber leading to her room, where he must inevitably see it, and waited trembling. He came, went again, said nothing. When she went to look, the hair had gone. The Duke never mentioned it and she did not dare. But years after, when he was dead and gone, she had found her tresses, wrapped up preciously and cherished among his most sacred and prized possessions.

And as this grim, fierce old woman whom she loved fell weeping at her own story and the memory of the stormy past, Mary took old Sarah's hand and felt sadly alone. What, she asked herself, did it profit a woman when she was old, to have been loved? Old Sarah, who knew more than a little of Mary's own life, admired her for saying nothing that was on her mind.

At her departure the old and the middle-aged woman kissed each other, Mary laid her arm round the Duchess for a moment. Blinded with tears, she went out and got into her carriage and drove home, feeling a despair deeper than any she had ever known before.

She packed her private belongings with an outwardly placid attention; left her house and drove south as if she were only going on a week's visit, her servants with her. On the road to Dover she called on her faithful friend the Duchess of Montagu and held a long conversation with her, cheerfully, with all her old vivacity. The next day she bumped and trundled off to the coast, hired a vessel, and set sail for France. Almost all her memories were bitter, and to Hervey who was still her friend, but to whom she no longer had anything to say, she sent no word.

CHAPTER XI

AN OLD SHEPHERDESS

Mary was fifty years old when she went abroad. The ambitious and expectant girl, the brilliant young matron, the reigning beauty and wit, the bitter-tongued satirist of Pope and enemy of so many others had already become a myth. The young people of 1740 used to quote her sayings and retail anecdotes about her. But if they saw her, they found it hard to believe that the strangely dressed, stout, untidy, and inexpertly painted dowager before them was she whose brilliant eyes the poets had sung twenty years ago, or whose assemblies had been crowded with celebrities from all over Europe, where all the men there were half-dying or pretending to be half-dying with love and admiration for her.

Most of her near relatives were dead; she had washed her hands of her son; she was still cool with her daughter. Many of her friends were dead too, others turned into enemies, and the rest of them somehow filled her with contempt. It was all very

well for Lady Pomfret and Lady Hertford to pride themselves on an intimacy with her, to compliment her on her verses, to seek her company. Mary had to keep somebody to talk to and to write to, but she regarded one of those ladies as a fool and the other as a pretentious *poseur*. In fact it was altogether rather a grim and inhuman old woman who left England that summer, though to her own satisfaction it was at least a woman free of that dreary mean husband of hers, with his bags of money and the cases of Greek and Roman coins and medals he sat fingering and fondling by the hour, his nightcap dangling over one ear and his bedgown in rags.

Why had she ever married Edward with his fussy ways, his querulousness, his stupidity and stockiness? That runaway marriage was a long time ago now—more than a quarter of a century. It was one of many youthful errors on impulse she had made.

Mary remembered her handsome father, her charming boy-brother, impetuous Frances and sulky card-playing Evelyn; her foolish, pitiful stepmother, and old Aunt Cheyne, the magnificent Duke of Marlborough and Robin Walpole's trollop of a first wife, and the gay brilliant Whartons, and the fat German, King George I. All of them dead. It had been a better world then, the sun shone oftener, there were more flowers and music, people had had

more fire and courage, and she had sometimes been acutely happy.

Frowning, she remembered too that wretch, Rémond, who certainly had the evil eye and brought her nothing but misery, and the little deformed monster of Twickenham, and the furious, distorted face of Mrs. Murray. What rankled most of all, still, were the myriad unpleasantnesses that came from Pope, and the myriad others that came with those. He had successfully fouled the air she breathed. What was it again—"Libeled by her hate"? And the world laughed at him first, with his gibes at her dirty linen, and Edward's avarice, and all the pother over poor mad Frances. But in the end the world had repeated it so often that every one believed it all.

She had been beaten at the game of life, she thought, as she huddled herself in her furred cloak down below in the little vessel, that tossed and pitched its way across the Channel. Curiously enough, she did not feel beaten, because there seemed no relation at all between this person she now was, this elderly, self-possessed, cynical woman on the ship and the fresh-complexioned Lady Mary of old time. This elderly woman was interested only in the landscapes of Italy she was going to see, the museums, the libraries, the ancient buildings, the

classical antiquities. For her a whole existence of tranquil retirement, study, writing and thought was only just beginning. The past belonged, with all its success and failure, to another woman, whose spirit lingered about London. . . . Lady Mary breathed the salt air with zest and sank deeper into her cloak. She was free for the first time in her life.

Over the Alps she went, through Turin to Venice, with her shrewd eyes well open, meeting English acquaintances unexpectedly everywhere, or, as she wrote back to England, "I met nothing disagreeable in my journey but too much company." Everywhere she stayed a few days, young noblemen with their tutors and older noblemen of her acquaintance came to pay their respects to her, whom every one regarded as a remarkable woman, and a great one. She was secretly pleased, and settled down in Venice in a house on the Grand Canal. Every one of note in the town entertained her, though it was not customary to admit strangers into the intimacy of Venetian high life. It was, as a matter of fact, regarded as treason to the State if a nobleman of the Republic were seen conversing privately with a foreign ambassador, and the Council of Ten would soon have busied themselves to know the reason why. That Mary crossed the dividing line which kept Venetians and others apart, save in general assemblies

and at ridottos, proved the peculiar esteem in which she was held.

The illustrious Lady Mary Wortley Montagu—however she might be hated and feared in London—was, the moment she reached the Continent, a most respectable, an admirable soul. She might have retired to Italy in search of seclusion and peace, but she received there the honors due to that justly celebrated lady who had (whatever else she might have done) rendered some services to literature and great services to medicine, who had been an ambassadress and a wit, and intimate with all the great and all the distinguished men and women of two reigns. She was rather surprised to find herself such a great personage; and it was with evident delight that she wrote home to Edward, and wrote to Lady Pomfret at Florence, an account of all the honors that were shown her.

"... I verily believe that if one of the pyramids of Egypt had travelled, it could not have been more followed. ..."

Her friend Abbé Conti was there to take up the thread of old conversations; the Procurator of St. Mark's, Grimani, another but not such an intimate acquaintance, was there. Mary found herself de-

lighted with "assemblies and other public diversions," the Carnival, concerts and balls, the opera, for which she was given keys to all the boxes of the many foreign ambassadors to the Republic, high masses, and a regatta or "race of boats" accompanied by

"vessels which they call Piotes, and Bichones, that are built at the expense of the nobles and strangers that have a mind to display their magnificence; they are a sort of machine adorned with all that sculpture and gilding can do to make a shining appearance. Several of them cost one thousand pounds sterling, and I believe none cost less than five hundred; they are rowed by gondoliers dressed in rich habits. . . . It would be too long to describe every one in particular; I shall name only the principal—the Signora Pisano Mocenigo's represented the Chariot of the Night, drawn by four sea-horses, and showing the rising of the moon, accompanied with stars, the statues on each side representing the house to the number of twenty-four. . . . Signor Contarini's piote showed the Liberal Arts; Apollo was seated on the stern upon Mount Parnassus, Pegasus behind, and the Muses seated round him: opposite was a figure representing Painting . . . and on each side Sculpture and Music in their proper dresses . . .

Signor Querini had the Chariot of Venus drawn by doves, so well done, they seemed ready to fly upon the water; the Loves and Graces attended her."

Lady Pomfret's son, passing through Venice, carried Mary's friend an apology for her delay, which the writer obviously did not intend to hasten, though she vowed she would. With what art and hypocrisy, with what charm, she wrote her excuses:

"If freedom could be found, that lot would sure be mine; certain atoms of attraction and repulsion keep me still in suspense; and I cannot absolutely set the day of my departure, though I very sincerely wish for it, and have one reason more than usual: this town being at present infested with English, who torment me as much as the frogs and lice did the palace of Pharaoh, and are surprised that I will not suffer them to skip about my house from morning till night; me, that never opened my doors to such sort of animals in England. . . . I verily believed, when I left London, I should choose my own company for the remainder of my days; which I find more difficult to do abroad than at home."

But for all that she did not hasten to Florence. At first a gnat had "saluted one of her eyes" and it was

swelled up. Then she had to remain in Venice as long as the Prince of Saxony did. Next her maid had suddenly proved to be with child and could not travel. It was September when she arrived in Venice. It was the following August when she "hastened" to Florence; for Venice had proved exciting. And how should it not, that Venice in which a young ecclesiastical student called Casanova was robbing the lower branches of the tree of fashion of its fruits—the man to whom we owe the most living memoirs of his and the so much more exalted Lady Mary's century?

However, to Florence she went at last, and bustled about the galleries, and wrote home rather indecorously about the statues of Antinous and Venus, and was in love with the "style" of the Italians, and found the cartoons of Raphael "damaged and effaced." And when she and her friend had wearied their legs with much trotting to admire antiquities, they would go back exhausted to Lady Pomfret's enormous house, join Lady Walpole, rake up gossip, debate very learnedly on the immortality of the soul, as Lady Pomfret had been so used to do of old with Queen Caroline.

There were learned ladies in Italy, too, it appeared, like Signora Bergali, the poetess, and they immensely wished to meet them, but were too busy.

Lady Pomfret held a reception every week at her house, to which the resident or passing English, the English Ambassador, Mr. Mann, and the best society flocked, to talk and flirt and walk in the garden.

And being English, they all, and Mary, were particularly sensible of the lack of moral censure that ruled abroad. People behaved as they did in England—that gay charmer, the Princess Craon, for instance, principal hostess of the place and celebrated for her evenings, was one of those kept mistresses whose husbands prospered at the instigation of their loves, such as existed in London and elsewhere—like the Kilmansegg. But here, under bluer skies, society made less of a pretense at self-righteousness. It was all so natural, why should one be censorious, or even malicious, beyond a worldly smile when any of the three were mentioned?

There is something in the Catholic tradition, for ease, Mary thought to herself with a cast back on her native land and its anomalies, as she passed slowly through Lady Pomfret's garden with Sir Francis Dashwood. The Arcadian fashion had caught all the Italians; extemporized poetry was the rule even at Lady Pomfret's, though while the "shepherds" and "shepherdesses" were busy with verse, the more stolid Englishmen would take refuge in another alley of the gardens, and, draw-

ing maps of Europe in the sand, with their canes, score them with lines and crosses for armies, and argue out the successes or failures of French, Spanish, German, English and Austrian troops then engaged in warfare.

But Lady Pomfret's company soon palled, and Mary was off to Rome by October, a little alarmed, rather than shocked, by the indiscretions of Lady Walpole's vehement atheism.

Before she left, however, a member of that young generation of English people of her own world whom she found little to her liking, had called to pay his respects. This was Walpole's son Horace, making the Grand Tour with the poet Gray—a person of Mary's circle and very much of her own stamp too. Had either of them been wise enough to see it, they might have appreciated each other. But Horace only saw a strange, disreputable old woman; and Mary saw only one more young man making the fashionable tour. He wrote home:

"Those learned luminaries the Ladies Pomfret and Walpole [his notorious sister-in-law] are to be joined by the Lady Mary Wortley Montague. You have not been witness to the rhapsody of mystic nonsense which these two fair ones debate incessantly, and consequently cannot figure what must be the

Horace Walpole

After the portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds

issue of this triple alliance: we have some idea of it. Only figure the coalition of prudery, debauchery, sentiment, history, Greek, Latin, French, Italian and metaphysics; all, except the second, understood by halves, by quarters, or not at all."

According to Horace, so much more venomous even than Mary herself, the gathering of these ladies was not harmonious, for later he says:

"Lady Pomfret who, though a learned lady, has not lost her modesty and character, is extremely scandalized with the two other dames, especially with Moll Worthless [Lady Mary], who knows no bounds. She is at rivalry with Lady W. for a certain Mr. ——, whom perhaps you knew at Oxford. . . . He fell into sentiments with my Lady W. and was happy to catch her at Platonic love; but as she seldom stops there, the young man will be frightened out of his senses. . . . Lady Mary is so far gone, that to get him from the mouth of her antagonist, she literally took him out to dance country dances at a formal ball, where there was no measure kept in laughing at her old, foul, tawdry, painted, plastered personage. . . . She is really entertaining: I have been reading her works, which she lends out in manuscript, but they are too womanish."

His description of Mary is terrible:

"Her dress, her avarice, and her impudence must amaze anyone that never heard her name. She wears a foul mob, that does not cover her greasy black locks, that hang loose, never combed or curled; an old mazarine wrapper, that gapes open and discovers a canvas petticoat. Her face swelled violently on one side with the remains of a ——; partly covered with a plaster, and partly with white paint, which for cheapness she had bought so coarse, that you would not use it to wash a chimney. In three words I'll give you her picture as we drew it in the Sortes Virgilianae—

Insanem vatem aspicies."

And it is no less terrible because it is so pat, with all Pope's charges accepted for true, and still less because it was perhaps more than a little actual truth.

For she had hardly left Florence than she wrote to her hostess that she was settled quietly, very quietly in Rome, and then, perhaps forgetting that she was writing a letter and not her diary, added one of the most significant phrases she ever wrote of herself:

"If among the fountains I could find the waters of Lethe, I should be completely happy,

"Like a deer that is wounded, I bleed and run on,
And fain I my torment would hide;
But alas! 'tis in vain, for wherever I run,
A bloody dart sticks in my side,

and I carry the serpent that poisons the paradise I am in."

The poisoned dart had many barbs in it, not all of the "wicked wasp of Twickenham's" planting either. Her son, she heard now, besides being wildly extravagant, had been consorting with thieves. Lady Pomfret suspected her of being in love with the young gentleman that had been dangling after Lady Walpole. The rest that she looked for was impossible to attain. Rome was full of spies, letters to England were dangerous, she might meet the Old Pretender (she did meet his sons) and that might give rise to all sorts of rumors, vexing to Edward, of her having turned Jacobite or goodness knows what. So she hurried off to Turin, Genoa. Now there was a fear of war. She hurried to Geneva. Now there was news of further trouble with her son, who pretended it was her fault his father would not do more for him. Then more alarms of troops when she got to Lyons, till at last she settled in Avignon, in the early summer of 1742.

Obviously much against her own will she agreed

at the request of Edward, who still refused to see his exiled son, to interview the reprobate herself, on condition that he should travel under an assumed name, in order that it might be decided what was best to be done with him. George I never hated George II nor Queen Caroline the father of George III more bitterly than Mary hated her son Edward. Though he was now a grown man, he was still banished from England by the wish of both parents, who regarded him as a disgrace. For not only was he very wild, very extravagant, very unscrupulous, but he had a habit of consorting with low people—that is to say, he did not content himself, as did young George Selwyn, Lord Abergavenny, or Richard Leveson Gower, with drinking, blaspheming, and generally debauching himself in company with other youths of his own rank. That was considered perfectly all right.

Young Wortley Montagu made friends with low people, not gentle people even, but with those who lived by their wits or even simply by trade. This, of course, was an abomination, like his silly marriage with a common old slut, which had vexed his parents so. True, the woman had never given them any trouble. They were prepared now to submit to their son's procuring false witness against her (and Lady Mary herself said it would be false, since the

woman was too old to have lovers and too poor to buy them) in order that he might get an Act of Parliament passed for divorcing her.

Young Wortley Montagu himself, who had at least enough humor and spirit to swear that he had never committed a small crime, had probably been ruined for ever, not only by the cold carping way his father had with him, the smarting way his mother had, but by all the interest he had seen centered in him as a child, when he was brought back from Constantinople with the scars of the celebrated operation on his little arm. He decided then that he was the most extraordinary person in the world; when later his father refused to recognize this patent fact, he began to behave in character. All his youth he veered constantly between a determination to become an upright, scrupulous, industrious young Whig and the inclination to give full rein to his love of excitement, of causing some one or any one to marvel at him, to get hold of money, no matter how (was he not a rich man's son, and ought he not to be able to live in style, after all), and to work off those burning spirits with which both his parents had endowed him. Young Wortley Montagu was composed of old Sidney, his grandfather, and old Evelyn, his other grandfather, as well as of his incisive, his alarming mother.

It was with distaste and a sinister contempt that Lady Mary met her son, in a furtive interview at a town some little way removed from Avignon, so that no English should witness it. She found him less handsome than of old, fat, genteel, voluble,

"the wildness that he always had in his eyes is so much increased it is downright shocking, and I am afraid will end fatally. . . . He had a flattering, insinuating manner. . . . The various things he has seen have given him a superficial universal knowledge. He really knows most of the modern languages, and if I could believe him, can read Arabic, and has read the Bible in Hebrew."

Lady Mary, in any case, was even more prejudiced against him than she had formerly been, since in Venice she had heard many accounts of his borrowings and mischief while in that town with his tutor. She had already told her husband that the best they could hope for was to get him to behave "as if he had a little more discretion than an idiot." Her son's request, a couple of years earlier, to be allowed to accompany her on her travels, had met with no encouragement whatsoever. As a matter of fact, she seemed on the whole to think the best thing that could happen to him was that he should be arrested by one

Edward Wortley Montagu, Junior

After a portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller, photo by Donald Macbeth, London

of the scores of creditors all over Europe that were anxious to pounce on him, and shut him up for life.

However, after the interview with his mother, this rather pathetic, reckless figure was permitted to return to England, and his father bought him a commission in the army, where it was hoped that, because he was well connected, he would perhaps get on if he was not killed.

Lady Mary trundled back in her coach to peaceful Avignon, and resigned herself to quiet again. It was not for nothing that she had asked for her saddle to be sent out, for she rode a good deal, and walked as well, besides attending some quiet little gatherings with various English people who visited or passed through the place. Of course she made enemies here: many of the visitors were Jacobites, and the Duke of Ormond, who had led a descent on the West of England, in favor of the Old Pretender, and been driven back, was living there. But politics had never interested Mary; she knew Whigs were the right people, and let it go at that. Only, of course, there was unpleasantness, and as she had been so intimate with the Walpole group, and as her husband was in Parliament, she was suspected of all kinds of dark doings. Her letters were opened, some intercepted, and consequently she was extremely careful what she said in them, save when it hap-

pened that some one she could trust was returning to England, and would deliver a letter privately. The whole of Europe was at war: England with Spain over "Jenkins' ear," despite all old Walpole's warnings, and now had drifted inevitably into joining Austria in her struggle with France.

But Mary saw a little company quietly, and found her principal interest in an old ruined mill, overlooking the Rhone, which—because she had said it pleased her—the consuls who governed the Papal town of Avignon had given her as a municipal gift. Here she was building, having a little roof put on the "rotunda" and turning it all into a place where she might sit and read conveniently, with a great prospect of lovely country at her feet.

The building of this retreat, and one other event, mark the beginning of Lady Mary's old age.

She had heard, of course, fairly often from her dear Hervey, that one only man who had understood her, whom she had understood, a man entirely of her own kind. And now that Walpole was at last out of power, Hervey, his bright shadow, wrote to tell her that, though he was "still alive, and still Privy Seal," that was all he could say, but

"there is one benefit, however, I enjoy from the loss of my Court interest, which is, that all those flies

which were buzzing about me in the summer sunshine and full ripeness of that interest, have all deserted its autumnal decay, and, from thinking my natural death not far off and my political demise already over, have all forgot the death-bed of the one and the coffin of the other."

Hervey was a rich man by now, and not long after grew richer. The crazy Duchess of Buckingham, grown very old, and crazier than ever, had sent for him. He found her, dressed in deep mourning, in a house shrouded in black. This was her constant custom on the day of execution of Charles I, whose grandchild by the left hand she was supposed to be, though her own mother, James II's mistress, said differently. She was in a mind for marrying off her grandson Phipps, a raw Irish boy, on whom she now decided to settle her fortune. Hervey mildly suggested, in his polished, insincere languor, that his own daughter, Lepell, would perhaps suit. And she did. The pair were married, though they had never seen each other before. And soon after the Duchess died, and left Hervey Buckingham House for life, with use of valuables of all kinds.

It merely amused him. His thoughts were on something else. He wrote to Mary, and he knew she would understand:

"The last stages of an infirm life are filthy roads, and like all other roads I find the farther one goes from the capital the more tedious the miles grow, and the more rough and disagreeable the way. I know of no turnpikes to mend them; medicine pretends to be such, but doctors, who have the management of it, like the commissioners for most other turnpikes, seldom execute what they undertake. . . . 'May all your ways' (as Solomon says of wisdom) 'be ways of pleasantness, and all your paths peace'; and when your dissolution must come, may it be like that of your lucky workman. Adieu."

Mary read this letter of Hervey's over again, slowly, seriously, as she sat in her tower, with its smell of fresh plaster. One of the men engaged in building it had been killed accidentally and with suddenness. She had told Hervey about it when she wrote. His reply touched her strangely; she fancied there was an unmistakable accent about it. And when toward autumn she heard that Hervey was dead, she was not surprised, but sat again in the tower and looked, without seeing, across the sunlit landscape, with its vineyards and rivers, and felt a curious quietness settle down round her, as if something very living had faded.

She did not want to think about her dead friend;

she chased memories of him away, of his corpse-pale face, with its painted cheeks and penciled eyebrows, seen after a dance in the dawnlight of a garden, of his enchanting way of seeming so careless and thinking so well, so surely, so quickly, of his long, fine hands, of his courage and cynicism when—suffering horribly—he used to make little flickering jokes about mankind and the Deity. . . . She did not want to remember Hervey. He had been very fine and very distinguished, and bewitched her too masculine nature with his too feminine brilliance. Well, he had come to an end now. She didn't want to think about him.

His son sent Mary, soon after that, a packet of letters which she had written him. She wondered a little which letters, though surely he would not have kept any best not seen by others, and yet, holding the little packet on her lap, felt quite suddenly so tired, so weak, and yet so curiously light—her legs were trembling—that, for nothing in the world, could she so much as turn them over. And she never read those letters of hers again.

She was an old woman, and Hervey was dead. She sat in her tower, and was vaguely interested in antiquities, and succeeded in not remembering Hervey. But, often, as she was by herself, she felt one of old age's round tears roll down her withering cheek.

She had not been used to weep, save for rage, in her youth.

What did it matter to her, now she was so very old, so very quiet, an antique shepherdess with an interest in the price of food and the cultivation of gardens, that her scapegrace son had fought in battles at Dettingen (though she chuckled to herself to think how martial George II must have enjoyed being brave there) or at Fontenoy, and that the Young Pretender, a pretty boy she had seen in Rome, led a rebellion into Scotland and upset England considerably? Hardly a feeling stirred in her when she heard that Pope had died, or that at last the old Duchess of Marlborough had died, or that Robin Walpole had died. It meant nothing to her now. She was sorry to hear that Thoresby had been burned down, but only remotely.

She decided to remove herself into Italy again, and on the way fell in, first, with the defeated Spanish army, and then the victorious German army, which welcomed her and admired her complete indifference to the cannon balls that now and then fell close by. Gallant, prancing hussars escorted her chaise, jingling along the roads toward the borders of the Venetian republic, and flourishing their swords truculently if an inn-keeper so much as

dared delay changing horses for Lady Mary's vehicle.

A young Italian, who had accompanied her from Avignon, lodged the old, but completely competent and unexhausted traveler at his mother's house in Brescia. Again it mattered nothing to Mary that she was taken very ill there, and nearly died, and recovered slowly, or even that her hostess and her hostess's son would not let her do as she wished, even when she was convalescent, and tried to manage her completely, and played fast and loose with her money. *She* was not intimidated. As a matter of fact she had taken rather a liking to the hospitable jailers at first; but liking with Mary often lasted only as long as curiosity. As soon as she was quite well and wanted to leave the house, she brought an action against them, and shook them off. And before long, she had found herself what she had, or so it seemed, always been looking for, a fixed and ideal abode.

It was a half-built château at Gottolengo, a fair-sized village some distance from Brescia. Not only the extreme cheapness of this place, but its retirement and picturesque situation on a hill in the center of the village, on the spot where a pagan temple had once stood, attracted her. She said nothing about it in her letters home, perhaps for fear Edward should

carp, which—far away though he was and little as she cared for him—still gave her flutters, even if it did not cause her to alter her set purposes. She went steadily to work, marshaled workmen and built up the place into a suitable residence for herself and her servants.

At some little distance, outside the village, she also bought a vineyard on the banks of the River Oglio, with a tiny cottage in it, and by little and little turned this into a fine garden, and the cottage into a rustic retreat, where she would live for weeks at a time, deserting her château in her industrious creation of a fine flourishing kitchen garden, flower-beds, poultry-yard, apiary, and heaven knows what.

The fine English lady of fashion had gone back to the land, not, as it was becoming the mode in France to do, *pour s'amuser*, and to imitate shepherdesses in a ballet, silk-clad and useless, round whom carefully laundered lambs might frisk decorously. Lady Mary threw herself into agriculture energetically and seriously; her lively emotions quieted, her restlessness vanished. Her active mind at last entered into the full domination of her whole being.

CHAPTER XII

ALL BEHIND HER

By the wooded bank of the river sits patiently an old lady, in clothes of costly but worn material, with a volume of Madame de Sévigné's letters beside her. In a rush basket close by, a freshly-caught fish is leaping, and a stone pot of milk, covered with a leaf, is standing on the grass. She is not a very fat old lady. She sits erect and casts with considerable skill—a practised fisher.

Trees wave overhead, grapes are swelling on the lush arbors of vines all round her, and the sun glinting through gives a peep of the flowers and herb beds and vegetable garden behind. The shrill note of a peacock disturbs the quiet, a blackbird in vexation gives a low whistle, and is off across the water to the woods beyond.

At noon she sups her milk and watches an old man and a boy, who come from the rear of the little cottage down the garden. They light a fire farther along the bank, where a charred circle tells of many other fires lighted before. The boy comes up and

takes the fish, and soon a smell of grilling floats on the air. He brings it and stands respectfully while his mistress eats the fish, using the point of a knife attached to the battery of implements of all kinds hanging at her side. He goes for some damsons for her, and brings a small deep-red rose as well, that she smells and smells again. She lets it lie in her ample-skirted lap, as she meditates on some past scene its scent has recalled. The lad helps her to rise, and she retires into the rush-strewn cottage and lies down to sleep through the heat. At four, she takes a bowl of tea brewed from a plant raised from true Indian tea-seed now growing in her garden, commends the fine stitchery done by the little Italian maiden who brings it, and goes out again. The old man and the boy are waiting, in a rowing boat with a green awning bobbing at the riverside. She goes down the tufted steps to the water's edge, gets in, takes her line, and tries for a trout as the boat glides along.

When the sun is already quite low, the maids in the house hear the oars shipped, wood striking wood, as their mistress returns. They hasten, some to give a last pat to the day's new-churned butter, some to tally the eggs once more, some to spread for her inspection their needlework. Bent backs in the garden are straightened as Miladi passes and speaks to the

women weeding and hoeing there. Ten minutes later her calash is bowling her away to Gottolengo.

To-morrow morning she will rise early and ride for an hour, sitting astride, because the children in the village, seeing her, when she first came, riding side-saddle—a method quite unknown to them—had remarked audibly on the sad case of the English lady who had only one leg.

Gardening, reading, bustling her staff, sleeping . . . the days pass.

Some afternoons she returns home from her vineyard early to play cards with the old priests who are her friends. Some mornings she spends chaffering with the village merchants, or with more considerable merchants from Brescia, over her produce. She traffics in eggs, poultry, the butter for which she is far renowned and such as no Brescian nor Venetian has ever tasted before, in wine and in raw silk—for in her plantations there are silk-worms—and in honey—for she has a score of beehives. She drives a hard bargain and speaks the Venetian dialect nimbly. Her bread is famous; her maids prepare outlandish and wonderful confections of which this English squiress has taught the secret to local housewives; cheese-cakes, custards, mincemeat and pasties. She writes poems in Italian, fairy tales in French, and many long letters in English which are

sent far away to a Contessa, who is her daughter.

This vigorous matron is she who was once the young, the gay (and many said the scandalous) Lady Mary Montagu. She has not seen her husband for nearly ten years. From time to time he visits the Continent, and goes to Hungary to lay in new stocks of the Imperial Tokay which is his one indulgence. But he never crosses the Alps to see his wife, nor does she expect him to, nor wish it. It has been arranged between them to respect each other at a distance; the only tie between them now is that of money, for Lady Mary is dependent on her husband for her allowance. He is more or less bound to give her one, since she had inherited six thousand pounds from her father. But the money is in his keeping. She augments her quarterly payments by her prodigious activities in her garden.

Her son seems to have settled down a little. He is in Parliament, but has been bidden take a seat on the opposite side of the House to his father, who will still not hold any conversation with him, though he allows him, also, money. But the son lives far above the income given him; he is exquisitely clad, flourishes magnificent snuff-boxes, and plays high at cards, with a good deal of luck. Lady Mary simply hopes he will keep out of mischief, and that she will never see and, if possible, never hear of him again.

Her daughter is another matter altogether. She had been fond of the pretty creature as a baby, in her white frocks. She had grieved at her choice of a husband, and opposed it with all her might, because the young Earl of Bute, while grave and graceful, was very poor. It was so clearly the duty of a parent to marry off children to such as would bring wealth to the family, that Lady Mary could not but have objected to Lord Bute. But her daughter had matched a sudden obstinacy to that of her parents, married, and gone off to the grim solitudes of the lone Scottish island which was her new home. And now, strangely enough, Lady Mary, although she had dismissed her daughter as she had done the rest of her family and acquaintance, when she came to settle in Italy in 1739, gradually found an interest in, then a new fondness for, the Countess of Bute growing upon her.

The young Butes, against Mr. Wortley Montagu's advice, had not long since decided to come to London, and had taken a little house at Twickenham at forty-five pounds a year. Lord Bute passed much of his time studying botany, to which he was devoted, and other sciences. It fell out that one day when he was invited to one of those endless parties of the Prince of Wales at Kew, it started to rain. The Prince had been playing cricket, a game of

which he was the fond patron. The sudden shower drove all the party within doors, and cards were called for. Lord Bute, by a chance, was chosen to make a fourth with His Royal Highness. His Royal Highness, taking a fancy to his partner, elected to see more of him. Lord Bute, from that time, took part in the private theatricals which were the rage of the Royal party. He was handsome, carried himself well, and proved quite a fair actor, distinguishing himself especially in a performance of Otway's *The Orphan.* And the sequel of it was that the Prince struck up a particular friendship with this hitherto obscure Scottish Earl, so that he and his charming wife were always about with the Prince and Princess.

Lady Mary, in her vineyard retreat, experienced a peculiar satisfaction at this sudden turn in the fortunes of her daughter and son-in-law. She wrote to them, of course, bidding them not trust too much in Court promises.

Events were causing her to undergo a change of heart toward her daughter; but it was not their bettered prospects alone which made Lady Mary embark upon that long and most charming correspondence with her daughter which, besides the correspondence with her husband during their courtship, displays her very singular power and charm.

Mary, Countess of Bute

After a portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds in Lady Mary Wortley Montagu by Lewis S. Benjamin, Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., London

It was the shadow of Madame de Sévigné which bade her write as she did, which inspired her pen, warmed her emotion, guided her heart.

Lady Mary had never envied any one, at least not to her knowledge. She had always felt herself a very unusual, a very superior person, who needed not even fear, as she would certainly never recognize, rivals. Even as a writer, she had been as free from envy as from conceit. The best poets of the day had praised her; so had two Courts. She was not in competition with the professional writer. She was a great lady of great talents.

But from the hour when poor dead Hervey had given her a copy of the *Letters* of Madame de Sévigné, she had hidden deep within herself a singular jealousy of that exquisitely poised, bright-humored, calmly aristocratic lady. It was a cry from the heart when she had written to her sister Mar, in Paris, that her own letters would be at least as entertaining in forty years. But she had gone on reading de Sévigné's *Letters* from time to time. Perhaps she may have realized dimly how much more polished, how much less solid they were than her own.

Now she was settled so peacefully at Gottolengo, her situation in regard to her daughter's was in the most perfect contrast to that obtaining between Madame de Sévigné and her daughter, Madame

de Grignan. Madame de Grignan had lived far away in Provence, and her mother in Paris wrote in that peculiar, sparkling way all her own to tell her the news, and describe to her the latest fashion in hairdressing—a sort of curled bob parted in the center. The Countess of Bute was about the Court of the heir to the English throne; *her* mother was an exiled farmeress in distant Italy.

But, for all that, there was a distinct Sévigné motif in this new interest Lady Mary developed for her child. In addition, she wrote because she had quite lost touch with every one in England save her friend Lady Oxford; she wanted to hear what was going on, what had become of her old friends. And most of all, though she would never have admitted it, she needed something to cling to, something to care for, a sentimental possession binding her to the world she had left. And as week after week she penned long, dignified, calm letters to her daughter, a real and at last almost entirely absorbing affection for Lady Bute welled up in her aged heart.

She described the little events of her tranquil life with vivacity:

"I had a visit in the beginning of these holidays of thirty horse of ladies and gentlemen, with their servants. . . . They came with the kind intent of

staying with me at least a fortnight, though I had never seen any of them before; but they were all neighbors within ten miles round. I could not avoid entertaining them to supper, and by good luck had a large quantity of game in the house, which, with the help of my poultry, furnished out a plentiful table. I sent for the fiddles, and they were so obliging as to dance all night, and even dine with me next day, though none of them had been in bed; and were much disappointed I did not press them to stay, it being the fashion to go in troops to one another's houses, hunting and dancing together a month in each castle."

Then, another time, the people of the village asked leave to turn her salon into a theater. Until she came there, it had been customary to use the stables at carnival time for presenting a play. Lady Mary's horses now reigned in the stables, however.

"I easily complied with their request, and was surprised at the beauty of their scenes, which, though painted by a country painter, are better coloured, and the perspective better managed, than in any of the second-rate theaters of London. . . . The performance was yet more surprising, the actors being all peasants; but the Italians have so natural a

genius for comedy, they act as well as if they had been brought up to nothing else, particularly the Arlequin, who far surpassed any of our English, though only the tailor of the village, and I am assured never saw a play in any other place."

This is the soil from which Goldoni, just then abandoning law for the Venetian theater, and his exquisite comedies sprang. This is the real, peaceful Venetian world of the mid-eighteenth century, reveling gracefully and decorously in the one quiet territory of an Italy shaken by almost continuous wars. Lady Mary understood and appreciated it, in her seclusion, as none of the superficial travelers did. True her bucolicism was serious, not Arcadian; but like any Arcadian shepherdess descending with attendant shepherds from a gilded coach to recite and listen to extempore verse in the open air, Mary also wrote poems as of old. So much had she adopted some of the customs of the country that, old as she was, she too had her *cicisbeo,* though she did not mention him to her daughter, and hardly any one in England ever heard of him. Only Horace Walpole's greedy ears heard a little rumor, and put the worst construction on it.

It was considered in Italy at that time that a married woman needed a male friend other than her

husband, who should dance perpetual attendance on her, amuse her with gossip and witty *mots,* hand her into her coach or her gondola and protect her against the gallant advances of other men. The *cicisbeo* held an official post; he was, as a matter of fact, often selected and appointed by the lady's relations at the time her marriage contract was drawn up. And the *cicisbeo* was only infrequently the lover of his lady.

The emotion of love was very intricately discussed by all people of leisure in that age; it was understood by them to be something very rare and refined, hedged about by doubts and a thousand fine shades, almost never to be blessed by enjoyment. For if the eighteenth century was robust in some of its habits, it was, as far as the upper classes at any rate were concerned, infinitely more delicate, infinitely more idealistic about love than the twentieth. It understood far better the enjoyment of the companionship of the opposite sex, as opposed to the enjoyment of possession; at least it did so in the drawing-room. Even Casanova, when meditating an attack on the person of a fine lady, had to arm himself with sophistry and not permit himself the rough teasings he reserved for chambermaids.

Lady Mary fully appreciated the advantage of having a young man in attendance upon her. There

were a thousand things he could do to save her pains. The Count Palazzo, who had brought her safely to Brescia through the German and French armies, served her in this capacity of hanger-on and general factotum. He lived near by, and rode out constantly; did her errands; fetched her letters; saw lawyers for her; stayed with her as her favored guest through the long winter months, when she rested a little from the ardors of cultivation. Sometimes he was impudent; often greedy. She bore with him, because he was a foreigner, and because she was lonely. It was at his suggestion that, feeling ill, she went first to drink the waters at Lovere, on the Lago D'Iseo, within easy coaching and sailing distance. She liked it so well that she stayed longer than was necessary, and for many years after she frequently returned there for a visit.

It reminded her very much of Tunbridge, and besides being a health resort and a most picturesque place, it afforded her entertainments. There were operas very well done, and

"diversions on the water where all the town assembles every night, and never without music; but we have none so rough as trumpets, kettle-drums and French horns: they are all violins, lutes, mandolins, and flutes doux. Here is hardly a man that does not

excel in some of these instruments, which he privately addresses to the lady of his affections, and the public has the advantage of it by his adding to the number of the musicians."

At Gottolengo busied with her chickens, at Lovere improving her health, she found the years stealing imperceptibly away. The news from London told her of the activities of people she had never heard of or of the deaths of those she had known. Her husband wrote her more and more shortly, or not at all. All her heart she centered now in her distant daughter, to whom she wrote sagely, bidding her make the best profit she could out of the favor of the Prince and Princess, yet not count on anything as certain until she had it.

And as she wrote to and thought about Lady Bute, it grew upon her more that this quiet, well-behaved daughter was to enjoy exactly those triumphs which she herself had somehow missed. Lady Bute was an intelligent, affectionate, calm sort of young woman; had a nimble tongue, but not tipped with venom, like her mother's; was handsome; was much admired, yet never even brushed by one slight whisper of scandal. Her mother, who had long buried all her ambitions, now dug them up, for her daughter's sake, and grounded some soothing hopes

in the coming brilliance of her child. There is something strangely touching in the picture of that silent thoughtful old woman in her vineyards in Italy, warming her cold heart at a vicarious, not a personal triumph, grieving over her child's family troubles, rejoicing over her prospects, counseling her almost apologetically, as one who had no right to advise, begging for more and more news of her.

Now she writes to her on the education of children, imploring her if those unknown granddaughters of hers are pretty, not to persuade them they are plain, but to help them to understand properly the advantage of beauty; not to lead them to expect riches; to study them individually; and above all sadly warning Lady Bute to prepare herself for disappointments, which are the lot of every mother:

"I wish you would moderate that fondness you have for your children. I do not mean you should abate any part of your care . . . but I would have you early prepare yourself for disappointments. . . . It is hardly possible, in such a number, that none should be unhappy; prepare yourself against a misfortune of that kind. I confess there is hardly any more difficult to support; yet it is certain imagination has a great share in the pain of it, and it is more in our power than is commonly believed to

soften whatever ills are founded or augmented by fancy. Strictly speaking, there is but one real evil—I mean, acute pain; all other complaints are so considerably diminished by time, that it is plain the grief is owing to our passion, since the sensation of it vanishes when that is over."

Now she is keenly interested at hearing her son-in-law has bought Kenwood House, and that the walls are to be covered with the new fashionable wall-paper. Another letter describes how, returning to her home from a "party on horseback," "after having ridden twenty miles, part of it by moonshine," she found a case just come from England full of new books, including all her cousin Henry Fielding's novels, in it. Sixty years of age, this robust lady, after riding all evening, sits up all night reading *Joseph Andrews*.

Her daughter telling her that the letters she sends are much appreciated, she writes more confidentially, naming some of her acquaintance. Lady Bute relates the new adventures of these folks from time to time, such as her old friend the Duchess of Montagu's having shut herself up now from the world; her nephew the Duke of Kingston's keeping a French mistress; Lady Mary Coke's much-advertised unhappy marriage. In reply Lady Mary sniffs

with disgust at *Pamela,* which she says has spread itself over all Europe, but another time admits that, though she despises Richardson, she sobs over him, and that Sir Thomas Grandison puts her much in mind of her own father. She offers sincere congratulations on Lord Bute's appointment to the Prince of Wales' bedchamber.

Mingled with her more worldly gossip, she states the convictions of her old age, the thought of which had once frightened her, but which now seems only the "rest that follows a laborious day." She is become a stoic; and, as a stoic, advises Lady Bute, instead of giving way to melancholy at misfortune, to "seek amusement; be willing to be diverted, and insensibly you will become so." She reflects that all mankind's little anxieties and schemes must seem "in the eyes of some superior beings, like the pecking of a young linnet to break a wire cage or the climbing of a squirrel in a hoop . . . let us sing as cheerfully as we can . . . and crack our nuts with pleasure from the little store that is allowed us." And on many occasions she expresses the strongest disgust for the "leveling notions" that are now prevalent, which would cry down the nobility, make common people pay them no respect. In her opinion, the only way to treat people of a lower order is to treat them plainly as inferiors, and not, as she had been taught herself,

with consideration. No good ever comes of consorting with people socially beneath one's self. . . .

Was she not thinking of Pope?

More new books come out to her, the china vases which had stood in the windows of the old Cavendish Street house, and little knickknacks of fashion like pinchbeck watches. She sends back, now and then when she can do so safely, a ring or a watch for one of her grandchildren. They are happy, she says, to have been born in an enlightened age.

"I do not doubt the frequency of assemblies has introduced a more enlarged way of thinking; it is a kind of public education, which I have always thought as necessary for girls as boys."

It seemed to her that better times had come in England; it was a new scene, one she had never viewed, filled with people to whom she was only a proverbial name, interested in politics under the control of men very different to those of her own heyday, dressing differently, seeing different plays. It grew the fashion, she heard now, to go bathing in seawater at Scarborough or Brighthelmstone, instead of to the Bath or Tunbridge. . . . This world so different either from the one where she lived or the one she had left years ago, glowed very brightly

to her imagination, especially now that her own dear child shone very prominently in the forefront of the day.

What, of course, she did not know was that her daughter's world was a wilder one, even, than that considerably hectic circle in which she herself had figured. The Prince of Wales was a strange creature: a free-and-easy creature, who loved games such as cricket, which, before his time, were only thought fit for tradesmen's boys, who liked nothing better than seeing a friend tossed in a blanket, who was not quite a bad poet himself, and admired men of letters, who dominated his wife, and pursued many mistresses. His circle was a really gay one, and Lord Bute himself was regarded by the others in it as more than a little of a *farceur*, a very conceited and not very clever but ambitious individual, who was immensely proud of his well-turned legs, and loved displaying them in an amateur play or under a lady's eyes.

The Prince threw his wife much in Lord Bute's company, which made people talk.

But Mary knew nothing of all this. She was deeply grieved when she heard that the Prince had died suddenly. This would, she feared, undermine the prospects of her daughter. But, in fact, it did so only for a little while. The widowed Princess of

Wales was appointed governor of the new little Prince, then only thirteen years old, and she elected to have Lord Bute appointed groom of the stole to her son, leaned much on him, and kept him always about her. This naturally occasioned more talk, especially as Bute always came to her in the evenings, in a chair belonging to some one else, with the curtains close drawn, and even sometimes got out of it before he reached her residence and crept in on foot.

Lady Mary was delighted to learn that all had gone so well, that the hopes she had entertained for her dear daughter had materialized.

Her rustic solitude suddenly palled on her; she felt she could not live much longer and decided that should she die at Gottolengo, her possessions there would certainly be stolen, misappropriated, or somehow lost to her family. Count Palazzo had fallen out of her favor after he had become very presuming. She determined to be rid of him and her farm, and departed for Venice in the autumn of 1756, to make arrangements for the disposal of her effects and to find a new retreat.

In that town she was particularly enchanted with a suite of furniture which she felt would make a lovely gift for the young Prince of Wales. All of the armchairs, the table and everything, were en-

tirely made of glass, and the price was only four hundred pounds. But the suite remained, of course, in Venice; Lady Mary was not so extravagant as to purchase it herself, much as she admired it.

Her return to Venice proved to be unlucky. She entered immediately into the worst possible terms with the British Resident, Mr. John Murray; continued to quarrel with him throughout her stay; thought he read all her incoming letters, fancied he detained her outgoing ones. He advised visitors from England to have nothing to do with her; told every one she was mixed up in politics (as if she could be, after so long an absence), and generally harassed her. For all that, she visited among noble Venetian families as of old, and, happy behind the disguise of a mask, went often to the playhouse or attended those magnificent public festivities in the open air for which Venice was famous.

She had taken a new country-house at Padua, and as soon as Count Palazzo showed his nose there, bade him be off "since she did not keep a hotel." Instead she took unto herself a grave little Doctor Mora, to be her secretary and guard her affairs, and, at the head of a considerable household of mixed Swiss and Italian servants, once more occupied her time with embellishing the palace and laying out the grounds, with reading all the new novels she could

persuade her daughter to send her from England, and with writing, for her own amusement, a history of her own times. It was not difficult, for she had known every one of importance up to 1740, and her lifelong habit of keeping a very full diary enabled her to recollect perfectly many events which otherwise might have passed from her mind.

But grave fits of depression came over her sometimes now; she reflected mournfully on the way of the world. That wretch Murray was persecuting her; she brooded on it; imagined consequences; feared everything; quarreled with people she met at card-parties; fancied young English boys on their travels, whom now and then she met, were impudent to her, because they fancied impudence was what she deserved, having heard such low accounts of her.

Then Dodsley the printer in London tiresomely published an old poem she had written years ago, and twisted it to seem like an answer to a declaration of love from a certain gentleman—raking up another scandal against her, in fact. She was thrown into a positive fever by this, wrote anguished and muddled letters to her daughter. Above all she hoped Mr. Wortley Montagu would not hear either of her troubles in Venice or of the poem. There was, as a matter of fact, little fear of his hearing of them, or of caring. He lived the life of a hermit at Wort-

ley, which from economy he was letting fall to ruins about him; now and then he voyaged in search of health, to Bath or abroad; his only interest was in his health, and in deciding whether cocoa settled well in his stomach or not.

In the thick of all her troubles, Mary heard that he was dead.

If the news was a shock to her, if it gave rise to sadnesses and regrets, she had no time to indulge them. Her quarrels in Venice grew daily more serious, and news from England informed her that her miserable son was making all the trouble he possibly could over his inheritance, had actually gone to pester his father on his death-bed, in hopes of picking up something or other to his advantage. Her own six thousand pounds seemed in danger, for Lady Bute had been made heir, with a yearly allowance to young Wortley Montagu, and Mary's own money was not specifically left to her, only an allowance. Edward had died worth a million and a half pounds sterling!

Broken in health, a horrible pain in her breast alarming her, Lady Mary decided to return to England, as indeed every one expected she would upon her husband's death. She packed up, collected her retinue of servants, and with great difficulty and

horrible discomfort made the painful journey to England, passing through Germany and staying at Rotterdam, too ill to proceed farther. On a sudden impulse, she gave two manuscript volumes of her *Letters from Constantinople* into the keeping of an English clergyman, who attended her in that town. And then, recovering a little, she set sail for England.

Lady Bute had taken a small house for her in George Street, Hanover Square. This kind daughter felt considerable anxiety at the return of a mother she had not seen for twenty-two years, and a mother so talked of, so old, so unkempt, whose reputation for scandals had, by telling, lost nothing in the years. It was all the more trying to the Butes, since Lord Bute himself, after the old King's death the year before, stood so high as the Dowager Princess of Wales' confidant and chief adviser and tutor to George III.

Back she came, however, and took possession of her little house, and wept when she saw her daughter again, now herself matronly. And kissed her granddaughters, and questioned them, and gave them advice and trinkets. All London ran to pay its respects, not only out of curiosity to see this grand relic of a past day, but to compliment her powerful son-in-law, the King's all-powerful favorite.

Horace Walpole hurried to see her, with the same curiosity that he rushed to see Red Indian chieftains, or the old King's funeral.

"I found her in a little, miserable bed-chamber of a ready-furnished house, with two tallow candles and a bureau covered with pots and pans. On her head . . . she had an old black-laced hood wrapped entirely round, so as to conceal all hair or want of hair. No handkerchief, but up to her chin a kind of Horseman's riding-coat . . . made of a dark-green brocade, with coloured and silver flowers, and lined with furs; bodice laced, a foul dimity petticoat sprig'd, velvet muffeteens on her arms. . . . Her face less changed in twenty years than I could have imagined; I told her so, and she was not so tolerable twenty years ago, that she need have taken it for flattery, but she did, and literally gave me a box on the ear. She is very lively, all her senses perfect, her languages as imperfect as ever, her avarice greater. . . . The Duchess of Hamilton, who came in just after me, was so astonished and diverted, that she could not speak to her for laughing."

Though Lady Mary herself had not taken the trouble to look at her own face in a mirror for many years now, she really had not changed very much.

Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, Queen of the Blues

After a portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds in Mrs. Montagu, Queen of the Blues, by Reginald Blunt, Constable, London

Her husband's cousin, Mrs. "Blue-Stocking" Montagu, also called to pay her respects, and found her vivacious and unaltered.

And vivacious she was; she had learned to be so even when she did not feel like it. There was a terrible pain in her breast, where a malignant cancer was devouring her, but she told no one of it. She was hurt that people came to stare at her, not to court her as of old. Her son Edward was making himself disagreeable over his father's will. She felt very tired, bewildered.

Lady Bute, who came to see her mother every day, was all consideration. Among other kindnesses, she had new suits of clothes made for her, so that she might receive company and pay visits befittingly. When she was tidy, the young King himself spoke kindly of her to Lord Bute, and was so gracious as to suggest that the fatigue of attendance at Court might be too great for her, so that he himself would come privately to speak with her at Lord Bute's house in South Audley Street, which he did.

Lady Mary rose from her chair as George III entered, with her son-in-law, and would have made her obeisance and kissed his hand; but he prevented her, and sat chatting for half an hour. The old lady impressed him, even though she would talk about Mr. Pitt, who somehow had become a favorite

of hers by thinking of him; and the King seemed all that a young man should be, to her, though she was feeling so ill she could scarcely look at him, or answer his remarks sensibly.

A few nights later, her daughter bore her off to an assembly at Bedford House, where some of her old friends, or children of old friends, wanted to meet her. She effected a magnificent entrance, leaning on her daughter's arm, richly dresed in yellow velvet and sables. Every one gasped. And though she bore it all bravely, said little, but spoke amiably as custom required of those presented to her, and looked once more into the eyes of an old friend or two, that gay evening too passed like a mist before her weary eyes.

But for all her physical misery and the great weariness of spirit that weighed her down, she was happy at heart. It was a personal triumph for her to witness her daughter's success as the wife of the most powerful man in the Kingdom. She saw how every one paid court to Lady Bute, and noticed that they did not only pay her court, but a real respect and admiration too. It was as if all she had wanted for herself, years ago—glory with tranquillity—had been withheld only in order that it might be bestowed where it would give her a great last happiness, a sense of triumph. For ten years and more

she had thought, walking and sleeping, of her daughter; it was her whole existence. And it had been crowned. Lady Mary knew nothing of the rage that was blowing up against Lord Bute—Jack-Boot as the mob called him; never dreamed of the great downfall in store for him so soon. Her daughter's triumph was what she had come to long for; and she had been fully rewarded. There was nothing else in the world she cared for now.

People spoke to her about things she did not understand fully: of the Cock Lane ghost, for example, to her who prided herself on not being superstitious; of the scandalous but successful gaiety of Miss Chudleigh, one of the maids of honor, who was being kept in an almost imperial splendor by Lady Mary's nephew, the Duke of Kingston. Now the Duke himself was kissing her hand, and her aged cheek; she could only look kindly at him, for she feared she might be guilty of tears, if she expressed any of the fondness she felt for this copy of her long-dead brother, of her magnificent father, whose riches he was so idly squandering.

Everybody was talking about America, but it had always seemed merely a terrifying seacoast settlement to her. She was vaguely glad to hear that the English had beaten the French there, and vaguely sorry to think what hardships English soldiers must

meet with in that savage land, with its scalping Indians.

She told her daughter she wished to retire, and went home to her little house, had her faithful maid undress her, and lay down gladly and hoped she would never have to get up again.

A few days later the pain in her breast became intolerable, and it was possible to conceal it only a very little longer. The news of her return, which had created a temporary stir, was followed by the news of her illness. Lady Bute came and wept over her, and did her endless kindnesses. The knocker of the house had to be swaddled in cloths, so many servants called bearing kind inquiries.

Lady Mary lay on the bed with her eyes open, and wished to think of something that was vaguely troubling her, but the pain was too bad. Doctors came. They gave her hemlock to deaden the pain, and she lay in a stupor for many days. Lady Bute, ever cautious, removed to her own house the score of volumes of manuscript her mother had brought back with her, fearing they might fall into ill hands, fearing the frankness of her mother's diary.

Night and day passed like shadows on a wall; Lady Mary lay half alive on her bed. Her granddaughters tiptoed in now and then and gazed at her, terrified. But she did not see them. Her father's

face would change to Hervey's; they smiled at her in a peculiar solemn way. She seemed to be struggling with a book; a crooked hand took her pen away.

And then one morning her eyes quite clearly saw the wall of her little room where she lay now. The frigid light of early dawn made everything clear. She turned her head, and saw with satisfaction that her jewel-box lay untouched on the bureau.

She suddenly felt very brave, and wanted to call out, and let them all know that she did not care, that the pain was nothing, that past wrongs were nothing. She had never felt in such full possession of all her faculties.

Her maid bent over her, and whispered to the doctor that Lady Mary was going; he nodded. There was nothing to be done. More whispering at the chamber door, and a footman, blinking, crept out to warn Lady Bute to come at once.

But Lady Mary herself did not see or hear them. She felt very full of courage, though it seemed to her that something was threatening her. It seemed to her that there was a great friend of hers, a friend . . . she did not know whom . . . but some one she was very fond of, very close to. She had a secret to tell him. She fancied she raised herself easily, and turned to tell it to him. But somehow she could not,

for the friend was swallowed up in a great shadow, and the words would not come. Only to herself, as if it were a magic ritual, she kept saying firmly: "It has all been very interesting; it has all been very interesting." Because she wished every one to know, definitely, that she was not conquered, nor afraid, nor had any regrets. Above all, no regrets. She tried so hard to give expression to her phrase that she fell asleep.

Another whisper at the door bade yet another footman run in haste to Lady Bute and tell her it was too late. Lady Mary Montagu was dead.

THE END

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